Affective Hal and the Aesthetic Education of Sorrow in Performing Iranian Classical Music

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the aesthetics of sorrow and melancholic expression in Iranian classical music, with special focus on the discursive and performing aspects of its pedagogical tradition. Although barely defined by performers, the ethos of *huzn* (sorrow) and melancholic ardor of *suz* (a burning heart) in the expression of *hal* (ecstatic and meditative state) predominates the aesthetics of Persian classical music and interpretation of affect. It is also prevalent in Persian philosophy, lyric poetry, and Islamic mysticism. Through close imitation and master-disciple interaction within private *maktabs* (traditional schools of artistry and intellect), performers invest years cultivating the interpretive skills of *hal* and poetics in their study of the Iranian *radif* music repertoire.

What are the traditional teaching methods of *hal*, and how did the socio-political and Islamic boundaries of Iranian society in the 20th century shape these methods? Although the concept of *hal* has attracted the attention of Western ethnomusicologists before (i.e., During 2012; Caton 2008; Zonis 1973), the aesthetics of affect within pedagogical traditions has remained underexplored, especially by native scholars. Through field-interviews with music teachers, a study of an extensive video archive of Iranian performances, and my autoethnography as a *maktab*-trained musician, I investigate the aesthetic and ethical pedagogy of *hal* in the 20th century.

I aim to show how the social and historical changes of modernization and revivalism, followed by the 1979 revolution, formed a dichotomy in methods of transmission and aesthetics of *hal* in the prominent *maktabs*. Through my own experiences as a female

performer in Iran, I also discuss issues of class and genre stratification within aesthetic

education in contemporary Iran.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Nasim Ahmadian. All aspects of this thesis, including multidisciplinary framework establishment, conceptual and methodological development, preparation of ethics application, conducting personal interviews, ethnography, autoethnography, transcription, analyses, interpretation of the results, and writing of the final manuscript, are the original contributions of Nasim Ahmadian. Professors Michael Frishkopf, Julia Byl, and Maryam Moshaver supervised the project and assisted with the conceptualization of ideas, interpretation of the results, and the editing and proofreading of the final manuscript.

The research project covered in this thesis has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board of the University of Alberta under the project name "The Affective Hal and Aesthetic Education of Sorrow in Iranian Classical Music" and study ID No. Pro00119238, in January 2023.

Chapter 5 of this thesis has been published (with minor modifications) as a book chapter to an edited volume: Ahmadian, Nasim. 2023. "Female Agency and Aesthetics of Sorrow in Iranian Classical Music." In *Women's Leadership in Music: Modes, Legacies, Alliances*, by Linda and Nenić, Iva Cimardi, 225-238. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. Research studies inspired by the methodology developed in this thesis were presented at the conferences Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) in Ottawa, Canada (2023) and the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) in New Orleans, USA (2022).

DEDICATION

To the memory of Ostad Faramarz Payvar,

Whose music, maktab, and presence made me fall in love with Iranian music

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the generous encouragement, kind support, and timely advice of many people. First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Michael Frishkopf and Dr. Julia Byl, for their tremendous knowledge, dedicated patience, and endless support in mentoring me throughout this project and my academic and personal life. I treasure their warm presence, generous encouragement, and friendship in every aspect of my life as a musician, researcher, and teacher. Their directions are always the source of confidence and ambition for me. I am deeply indebted to my committee advisor, Dr. Maryam Moshaver, for her meticulous insights, generous friendship, high wisdom, and kind support as my advisor and Director of Music Graduate Studies during a critical time of my studies. She remains one of the highest role models in my professional life. I am also thankful to Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi for his insightful comments and generous guidance through a part of my research. I want to thank my examination committee, Dr. Jonathan Stock and Dr. Jairan Gahan, for their invaluable suggestions and insightful perspectives on my dissertation.

As a female musician in Iran, a country with many restrictions on music and female musicianship, I have encountered and overcome many hardships through the years of learning, performing, and teaching music under the valuable mentorship of my teachers. I am sincerely thankful to my music teachers, Master Ali Aliheidari, Master Saeed Sabet, and the late Maestro Faramarz Payvar, for constantly inspiring me. I am deeply indebted to the constant support of my first teacher in ethnomusicology, Dr. Mohammad Reza Azadehfar, who is a source of encouragement and vast horizons for me. I thank Dr. Regula Qureshi for

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Avaz: (singing) The art of Persian singing. It also refers to the vocal *gushehs* (usually non-fixed metered) in *radif*.

Dastgah: (organization, system) A set of traditionally grouped pieces, most of which have their own modes. It also stands for the modal identity of the initial piece in a group.

Ehsasi: Passionate, with delicate and vibrant emotions and expressive interpretation.

Ghazal: Originally a form in Arabic poetry dealing with loss and romantic love. Medieval Persian poets embraced the ghazal, eventually making it their own. The form also has an intricate rhyme scheme consisting of syntactically and grammatically complete couplets.

Gusheh: (corner, section, piece) A generic term to refer to individual pieces that constitute the repertoire of a *dastgāh*. *Gushehs* consist of melody models and can be vocal, instrumental, or both. They are also categorized into three metric structures: fixed, elastic, and free. The majority of *gushehs* are in the free meter.

Hal: an ecstatic and meditative state

Huzn: sorrow

Maktab: (school) School of art, aesthetics, and intellect. It is used for various disciplines, from philosophy and Sufism to music, art, literature, and even regional schools of thought and aesthetics. *Maktab* is sometimes used as a substitute for "style" in arts.

Ney: An end-blown flute that figures prominently in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic music. Ney is one of the Iranian national instruments.

Ostad: (master) A title given to an acclaimed teacher, especially in music, art, and literature. It may be used to address an ordinary teacher as a sign of respect.

Ostadi-Shagerdi: (master-disciple) special relationship including master-student hierarchy and intimacy in Iranian arts

Radif: (row, series) The pieces that constitute the repertoire of Persian traditional music are collectively called the *radif*. To be sure, these are not clearly defined pieces but melody models upon which extemporization takes place.

Santur: The Persian hammered zither (dulcimer) is known as one of the main instruments in Iranian classical music.

Setar: a stringed instrument and a type of lute used in Persian traditional music, played solo or accompanying voice.

Tar: Long-necked, waisted lute family instrument used by many cultures and countries, including Iran, Azerbaijan, and others near the Caucasus and Central Asia regions. It is one of the Iranian national instruments.

Taraneh: A more modern form of *tasnif* with light poetic context, supposedly under the effect of Western pop music.

Tasnif: A composed song in a slow meter and one of the more recent (early 20th century) forms of composition

Tombak: An Iranian goblet drum and the principal percussion instrument of Persian music.

Zowq: (taste, talent) talent and creativity for art

NOTES ON TRANSLATIONS AND TRANSLITERATIONS

All translations from Persian texts are provided by the author of this thesis unless otherwise indicated in footnotes. For the poems and literary phrases, if the translator is the author or a different known reference, it is mentioned in parentheses. However, in many examples where the translators of the poems are unknown or cannot be found, the access links to the translated sources have been indicated in the footnotes. Also, the access links are included in the footnote for the video examples.

The system of transliteration used in this thesis is a modified version of the IJMES Transliteration System: I have removed all diacritical marks except for an apostrophe (‘) in the middle of certain words, which indicates the letters *ayn* or *hamza*. All the Persian concepts and terms except for the names are in Italics. For terms such as *ostad* and *maktab*, when they are used as a title, the first character is capitalized (e.g., *Ostad Saba*, *Maktab Saba*). When citing other publications, the transliteration style of the original text has been preserved.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Hal

> *Listen to this reed and how it wails*
> *Of going away and other sad tales.*
>
> *The song of this pipe is not of wind but fire:*
> *Let any whose heart is not ablaze expire.*
>
> *The reed speaks of the long, bloody track*
> *And tells of Majnun's love, torture and track.*
>
> *Those not drunk on love will never hear*
> *Of wisdom, as stories always descend through the ear.*
>
> *Deep sorrow through to night holds sway,*
> *Deep sorrow drifts through all the day.*
>
> Rumi, (Ney-Nameh) *Masnavi*[1] I 1-18

Discovering Hal

"I would say you have *zowq*[2] (artistic taste). You have the *khamireh* (dough) for cooking it

for performing *ehsasi* (with a passion) and creating *hal*. It is a value you must cherish

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[1] Blodgett, E. D., and Manijeh Mannani. 2017. *Speak Only of the Moon: A New Translation of Rumi.* Toronto: Guernica Editions.

[2] Also zowgh

diligently". These words were the primary serious assessment of my first *santur* teacher, *Ostad* Ali Aliheidari, during the early months of my classes with him. Through my first steps of learning *santur* at the age of thirteen, I began to discover the complexity of Persian classical music and the unexpectedly vast horizons of its aesthetics, presenting me with the anxious question of whether I could master it someday. "*Khamireh*" and "*jowhareh*" (essence) were my *ostad*'s selected words for "talent," albeit with references beyond the general or literal meanings of the word.

In his feedback, there was an intuitive[3] productive sense of expressivity attached to the words for talent that should lead over other aspects of musicality. Both words, "*khamireh*" and "*jowhareh*", articulated the meaning of a more formally used word in arts and literature—*zowq*—which means a rich and productive common sense for aesthetics or artistic taste and talent. While all these terms are the common master-disciple vocabulary of many Persian art traditions, I realized later that what my teacher specifically meant in music was a sort of emotional and perceptive talent, an internal sensitivity, and an intuitive understanding of the aesthetics and emotions of Iranian music. This understanding was essential for playing *ehsasi* (with delicate, vibrant emotions and expressive interpretation). Some musicians[4] refer to the quality of *ehsasi* as "*hal,*" which has an *asil* (authentic) capacity. In the eyes of many Iranian musicians, including my teacher, the quality of *ehsasi* and *hal* is a "*sham'e daruni*" (lit. internal burning candle). It is the flame, an innate ability beyond musical technicality and performing virtue, that you wish to possess inside as a

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[3] This concept and its use in the context of Iranian art education is explained in Chapter 2.
[4] There is no homogeneity in using one of these words. Some traditionalist teachers such as Borumand and Safvat highlighted the word "*hal*", while some of my interviewees preferred *ehsasi*. Some of them even tried not to use the word "*hal*" to differentiate their views from the traditionalists such as Borumand or to clarify the musical secular *hal* from Sufi *hal* since this word is common in various disciplines. This point is later discussed in Chapter 2.

performer and find in your students' hearts. This "flame" allows for communicating Persian

music in a powerful aesthetic sense and touching listeners' hearts through the richness of

affect of authentic[5] artistry. *Zowq* is the capability for performing and understanding *hal*

that, in the eyes of many artists and educators, is obtainable in training. At the same time,

the base of this flame must be a part of the artist's innate sense and intuition. If the person

lacks this *tab'e daruni*[6] (internal emotional nature at birth), it is not obtainable in

education. Like many other traditions of Iran, Persian classical music is customarily

expected to present *zibaei* (sublimity) even when sharing tragedies, social objections, or

hardships to impress the listener emotionally. Besides the authentic content, the key to that

sublime performance is playing *hal* or *ehsasi* based on the development of emotional

expression within the aesthetic frames. A balance between these elements is considered a

treasure of Persian classical music. *Ostad* advises, "A good performance should be

delneshin" (passionate), meaning it should poetically touch and move the hearts. "You

cannot play *delneshin* until you have become *del-sukhteh* in this music" (burnt at heart), he

adds.

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[5] While this term (Persian: *esalat*) is debated and controversial in music studies, it is a frequently mentioned term and central concept in Persian music artistry. I will explain more about its significance in *maktab* learning in the upcoming chapters.

[6] In the musical context, it highlights a person's specific perception for emotional and creative expression of music as a genetic or personal character-based talent. However, this concept roots in the historical and philosophical system of humorism known as *tab'-shenasi* in Persian medicine that connects some physical and emotional characteristics and talents of a person as part of their natural makeup. In music, this (genetic) ability is part of having *zowq*.

Hal In the Classroom: Reflections

My *santur* class was held in a small room in *Ostad* Aliheidari's modest house. He was of Azeri[7] ethnicity with a slim figure and articulate voice. Although in his late thirties when I first met him in the classroom in March 1999, he looked older with his half-grayed bushy curls and facial wrinkles, perhaps as the apparent impact of his sensitive dedication to teaching this music, which was demanding a great deal of his passion and patience, as I learned through the following years. Even though he was the only *santur* teacher in Abhar—a small town not far from Tehran, where my family resided for a few years—his class was affordable to everyone, albeit financially, though not in terms of discipline. *Ostad* Aliheidari was committed, critical, meticulous, and faithfully strict in his teaching of the highly respected *maktab* (artistic school) of the great *Ostad* Faramarz Payvar (known as *maktab Payvar*) and the students who failed to dedicate themselves to diligent learning were dismissed. Regardless of the teaching strictness and occasional quick temper, under his disciplined character and determined voice, he was a sensitive musician with high principles and a close emotional bond who called his students "his children" and generously offered them his fatherly help even in their personal lives. In his belief, the classroom was about learning art, respect, discipline, and human values, and the students had to be devoted seekers regardless of musical challenges and the teacher's temper. Beyond the class principles, however, the *ostadi-shagerdi* (master-disciple) relationship— especially to his favored students—was close almost as a family and durable for a lifetime.

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[7] An ethnicity in the west and north-west of Iran.

His *santur* course—as in the old *maktabs*—was indeed a lifestyle with moral expectations, ideals, and philosophical layers, and to many of his students, he was a role model and master of music and life as his own *ostad* had been to him. This heritage had been passed down through a shared musical lineage under his teacher, *Ostad* Saeed Sabet[8], one of the eminent students of *Ostad* Payvar and a prominent source of transmitting *Maktab Payvar*, to which my teacher introduced us gradually from the very first session. Maintaining the legacy and identity of this *miras-e honari* (art heritage), including its *shajareh-nameh* (family tree), was a major artistic and social component of learning this music.

In Aliheidari's classroom, the collective setting was a part of the teaching method and listening tradition. There were two chairs next to each other for *Ostad* and the student taking a lesson on *santur*. Other students had to sit around the room listening quietly and attentively. Their attention was required to keep the *adab-e shanidan* (courtesy of listening) and learn and respond to Ostad's random or related questions for the students in the classroom. Unlike the modern music classrooms in private institutions in contemporary Iran, waiting time was inevitable as the schedule was not always strictly enforced. *Ostad* had various time limits for each student according to their needs or the session's circumstances. He believed in the importance of patient motivation, enthusiastic learning, full attendance, critical comprehension, and serious listening. Accordingly, as an unbreakable rule of dedication, *Ostad* would never go to a student's house to teach as a tutor; instead, the student, *talabe-ye honar* (the passionate seeker of art), came to the

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[8] I completed my advanced level of *santur* training with him over the years. I will bring some of his views in this dissertation to show both similarities and varieties of teachings in a given *maktab*, *Maktab Payvar,* upon which most of my ethnography focuses.

master. *Ostad* is the height of hierarchy, and the loyalty and sincerity of the apprentice make him a refined and pure representative of the craft. The most crucial learning ethics are sincerity and generosity through receiving and transmitting the art. They build an element of trust passed down from a master to an apprentice. *Figure 1* demonstrates my *santur maktab* heritage with each color specified to the specific *maktab* of an ostad.
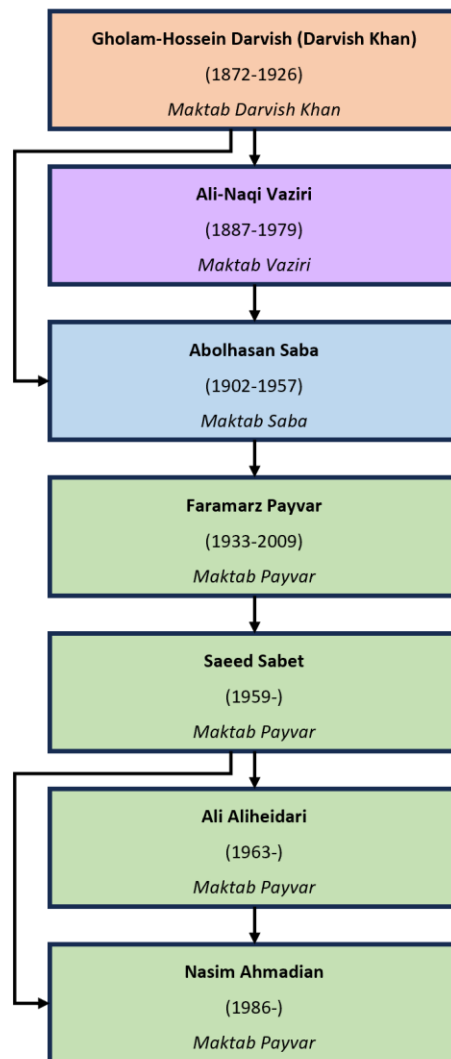
Figure 1. A sample of my musical family tree in the santur maktab of Payvar

One's initial perception of the intimate and prolonged classroom setting was the homey environment, featuring not only a rather ordinary Persian carpet—of subtle colors—as our occasional gazing point during the listening hours but also a small high window covered with a white handmade lace curtain which opened to a narrow quiet lane outside and often shared the joy of a cool breeze in long summer days.

Stepping toward the house from the outside each session, the echo of *santur* playing resonated across the neighborhood, leading any passerby to *Ostad*'s home through the narrow alley. Indeed, the small high window soon defined a border for me between the outer world and my discovered musical refuge where everything was illuminated by a cultivation of respect, specific moral codes for artists, and a presence of the (musical) ancestral heartbeat through connecting to the *maktab* family tree. Like other students, I developed a habit of standing and listening by the window from the outside to recognize whether it was *Ostad* or a student playing. When *Ostad* was playing, our respectful listening manners were to wait until the end of the piece and knock on the door afterward. As one of the students or one of *Ostad*'s younger children opened the door, the custom was to take off our shoes and neatly put them next to the wall. *Ostad* used to walk along the hallway while listening to students play, and he addressed any sign of untidiness by saying, "It is for an artist to present a refined taste and arrangement in everything. Not only the *santur* skills but all your manners and personality should also represent the decency of this art [and *maktab*]". Cultivating various dimensions and details of a refined artistic taste in music and humanity was the essential—and partially unique—core of rules in our classroom, which my teacher included as a *miras* (heritage) from the classical *maktab* of the great *Ostad* Faramarz Payvar and his predecessor master musicians that must be continued.

Stepping into the house, I could feel the coziness of the dim light, old wallpaper, and the modest furniture in a small living room connecting with the classroom area. The house had a particular antique smell—of old architecture—which turned into nostalgia as I grew gradually accustomed to it through time. The intimacy of the space and its connection to the ancient tradition of home private teaching settings in Persian music perfectly sheltered all the artistic, physical, and spiritual values it held, which I eventually found unique through my following years of education as a music major in formal music schools and universities.

The small classroom was traditionally decorated with *Ostad*'s awards of honor, framed photos of the great masters, and calligraphies of Persian poetry on the walls (*Figure 2*). He cherished them for their artistic and symbolic value, especially since many of them were gifts of appreciation from his pupils and colleagues. These symbols were simply part of the musical and learning space. Years later, when I step into his old *Ostad* Mr. Saeed Sabet's private institution in Tehran and quickly find an old framed calligraphy of a poem of appreciation on the wall signed many years earlier as "from your sincere student, Aliheidari," I catch myself in a nostalgic scene, as a *sense of belonging* that dynamically moves between the past and present of this musical genealogy. I *fit in* as the third generation of this artistic *maktab* family. In this inherited school, it is honorable to celebrate and graciously mark a lifetime shared in a master-disciple circle in the form of a visible piece of art, handwritten text, or poetry for a gift of appreciation.

Figure 2. My santur class with Ostad Aliheidari at his home (1999). Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

Back to *Ostad* Aliheidari's wall in the tiny classroom, a framed famous verse by Hafez,

which I particularly remember from a lavishly embellished[9] calligraphy, read:

بیا تا گل برافشانیم و می در ساغر اندازیم

فلک را سقف بشکافیم و طرحی نو دراندازیم

Hey come lets scatter flowers around

and fill the chalice up with wine

We'll crack the heavens' vault in half

and hew a wholly new design.

(Ghazal by Hafez, Eng. translation link[10])

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[9] Persian art of *tazhib* (illumination)

[10] Ghazal by Hafez, translation link: https://www.niloufarprintmaker.com/gallery/the-rocks-restaurant-%26-bar

Research Focus and Objectives

This thesis explores the aesthetics of sorrow and melancholic expression in Iranian classical music, with special focus on the discursive and performing aspects of its pedagogical tradition. Often described as presenting the *huzn* (sorrow) of a "*del-sukhteh*" (burning heart), the expression of pathos and melancholic ardor are associated with the aesthetics of *hal* (an ecstatic state with a passionate power). Developing hal is also a predominant element of aesthetics in performing and teaching Iranian classical music. The recurring tropes of *huzn* as a poetic and profound state of "*sheidaiee*" (devotion to the beloved) have been enhanced in the textual content and expression of Persian *radif* music repertoire through its structural, lyrical, and thematic interrelation with Persian love poetry. The poetics and its musical interpretation also derive from the ecstasy of *hal* in Islamic philosophy and the practice of *'erfan* (Shi'a Persian mysticism) from the medieval era. The dominance of Shi'a Muharram's mourning rituals, especially *ta'zieh* (passion plays) through using and teaching the classical music repertoire, artistry, and forms, have added the continuity of sorrowful affect in Persian music training. Additionally, there are numerous historical and philosophical references regarding the influence of sorrow in performing affect during the Sasanian era of pre-Islamic Persia.

In this research, I focus on the pedagogical traditions regarding the aesthetics of sorrow and cultivation of *hal* in a selected number of *maktab* trainings since disseminating the Persian *radif* repertoire in 19th century Iran. I examine the musical and pedagogical components through which Iranian performers emphasize the aesthetic expression of pathos in their musical performance and transmission of *hal*. My key questions explore

three aspects as the following: how *zibaei-ye ehsasi* (aesthetics of emotion) is expressed by the teacher in performance and what characteristics it presents; how teachers transmit the aesthetics of *ehsasi* or *hal* to their students; and how the connection of musical, poetic, and mystical traditions establish the pedagogy of pathos within the larger context of the socio-historical life in Iran.

No comprehensive research has been conducted on the aesthetic of sorrow and affect in Iranian music education. Also, the study of Iranian *maktab* pedagogy as a tradition of music education through its aesthetic and interpersonal aspects remains unexplored. Previous studies related to the music education of *radif* primarily focused on the musicological (Nooshin 2016; Nettl 1972; Zonis 1973) and historical (Lucas 2019) aspects of the *radif's* structure and improvisation. A number of studies have focused on the spiritual and mystic elements of *hal* in Persian music through a general approach (Caton 2008; During et al. 1991), although without examining the related factors of emotion and poetics in the pedagogical aspects and cultivation of *hal*. The historical studies on Persian classical music and its social context also lack ethnographic research and oral histories, especially in post-revolutionary Iran. My research examines both elements of musical content and human interaction in the process of *maktab* training through which aesthetics and affect are developed. I analyze how the philosophical and poetic perception of sorrow within Persian cultural history works aesthetically and ethically for the musician in the interpretation of *hal* and sorrow. Through my research, I hope to contribute to the interdisciplinary studies of aesthetic education, Iranian studies, and the ethnomusicology of affect.

Persian Imagery and Reflective Narration in Writing

One of the aims of this research is to demonstrate the context of appreciation and encounter with aesthetics and affective aspects of classical music in practice and training from a native Persian perspective. Most previous publications (in English) related to *hal*, and Persian music training were written by non-Persian scholars (e.g., Nettl, Zonis, During, Caton) without delving into the linguistic and rhetoric interlinks of music and culture. While these publications present profound perspectives regarding music education in Iran, many fundamental aspects of pedagogy, aesthetics, and emotion and their interrelations within Persian thoughts and interactions remain unexplored. Thus, as a Persian-speaking Iranian, my efforts to describe the intangible quality of *hal* and my classroom experiences connect me to a distinct world of rhetorics in writing and transmission of thoughts and observations that lie in the Persian common expression of imagination or the focus of "imaginative faculty" through the imagery, metaphors, and tropes. This rhetoric aspect implies a specific utilization of the human faculty with "an interpretive power that lies beyond sense-data, while still not being pure fallacy" (Landau 2012, 30). In my experience, there is a connection between the Persian literary taste of poetics and Iranians' perception and reflection through metaphors upon encountered thoughts and events in both artistic and ordinary daily life.

In her article "Rhetorical Figures," Natalia Chalisova refers to the "aesthetic tenets" as the core of Persian literary theory; in contrast, in neighboring traditions, e.g., Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and to a certain extent, even Arabic, rhetorical figures serve only as a compliment to other parts of the literary canon (Chalisova 2009 in Seyed-Gohrab 2012, 7). Grounded in a

history connected with nature, cosmology, philosophy, arts, and language, Persian rhetoric often perceives and reflects through imagery and metaphors. There is also an image of a limitless universe in a holistic view to which a Persian mind—thinking frames and tendencies cultured and educated in the Persian context—considers oneself a small unit yearning to unify or interconnect with the whole through symbolic metaphors and lyrical description. Here, I share some examples from Medieval Persian poetry that convey this holistic perspective both poetically and philosophically, related to human feelings of pain and sorrow in particular:

In a love-themed *rubaei* focused on the previously mentioned holistic view, Mowlana Rumi's self-narrative reference to the suffering of "*gham*" (sorrow) as a disease, translated as "grief," is in accordance with the suffering of separation, a painful loss:

<div dir="rtl">

من ذره و خورشید لقایی تو مرا

بیمار غمم عین دوایی تو مرا

بی‌بال و پر اندر پی تو می‌پرّم

من که شدم چو کهربایی تو مرا

</div>

A mote am I, Thou my shining sun;

Of grief I die, Thou my cure alone.

To Thee I fly on, no wing upborne-

A straw am I, by Thy amber drawn.

(*Rubaei* by Mowlana Rumi. Eng. translation link[11])

In a globally known piece called "*Bani-adam*" ("*human beings*") from the book of *Gulestan*, Sa'di brings his metaphoric reference to humanitarian values:

بنی‌آدم اعضای یک پیکرند

که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند

چو عضوی به‌درد آورَد روزگار

دگر عضوها را نمانَد قرار

تو کز محنت دیگران بی‌غمی

نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

Human Beings are members of a whole

In creation of one essence and soul

If one member is inflicted with pain

Other members uneasy will remain

If you have no sympathy for human pain

The name of human you cannot pertain

(*Bani-Adam* by Sa'di, Eng translation in Wikipedia)

Based on this self-inclusive poetic view, in sharing my classroom experiences, field observations, and other musicians' examples, I, as a trained ethnomusicologist writing in English, often choose to move between the linguistic frames and cosmological appreciation of the two contexts—Persian and English—of narration. Although overlooked in previous publications, I find it necessary to discuss the nature of a distinctive Persian or Iranian cultural understanding through poetic language. This process of thinking, describing, imaging—and imagining—allows me to present this artistic tradition in a foreign language domain (English) and writing tone. It is within the context of Persian poetics, philosophy, and cultural memory that I believe musical aesthetics are perceived and received by

performers and audiences. My deliberate contemplative mobility between these two writing cultures, tones, and lingual scopes, therefore, is to suggest the transcending perspective for non-native readers and help native (Persian) readers re-configure the unconsciously acquired context of aesthetic understanding. This narrative preference is also a part of the aesthetics of my ethnography, which I wish to contribute to the conventionalized method of writing in contemporary ethnomusicology.

Additionally, when necessary, my recollection and representation of the classroom experience from the early to the advanced levels of learning are deliberately shared in a progressive format (e.g., as a young adult in early exposure to this aesthetics in progress to discover more professional aspects through the learning process). This reflective writing method describes the multi-level path of aesthetic education of Iranian music and presents a genuine (auto)ethnographic and personal experience regarding my research. I find it necessary in this study to have an overview of the gradual formation of the aesthetic appreciation and ethos of performance within the emotional scope of *hal* from a firsthand experience and, at points, in an accurate developmental process as it happens for a music learner.

Background Studies: Affect, Aesthetics, and Music Education

In their psychological study of music and emotion, "Who Enjoys Listening to Sad Music and Why?" music psychologists Vuoskoski et al. state that, unlike the sad events of real life, sad music is experienced neither as unpleasant nor negative. Instead, aesthetic appreciation and empathetic engagement play a significant role in enjoying sad music (Vuoskoski et. al. 2012). In his overview of the theories on music as a symbol, Stephen Davies (2010, 25)

defines music operating as a symbol or sign with a purely associative and conventional import. Without bearing a natural relation to an emotion, music characterizes an emotion through reference to its place within a system. Therefore, musical signs, like linguistic ones, are opaque to their referents. Mentioning an alternative theory, Davies explains music as referring to the emotions not within a symbol system but as a result of "arbitrary designations and associations." Thus, certain musical gestures or phrases happen to link saliently with texts that are expressive of given emotions and retain the connection over many years in their re-emergence in the instrumental format. Or they may be the linkage between music of certain kinds with rites and events, resulting in their persisting emotional ties that are typical examples of this musical expressiveness.

In a more specific sense, ethnomusicologist Judith Becker (2011, 129) introduces the anthropological aspects of music and emotion by focusing on the "habitus of listening," the perception of musical emotion, and learned interactions with surroundings. According to her definition:

> A habitus of listening suggests not a necessity nor a rule, but an inclination, a disposition to listen with a particular kind of focus, to expect to experience particular kinds of emotion, to move with certain stylized gestures, and to interpret the meaning of the sounds and one's emotional responses to the musical event in somewhat (never totally) predictable ways.
>
> (Becker 2011, 130)

Adapting from Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* "as a system of dispositions" (Ibid.), Becker describes habitus of listening as "the interrelatedness of the perception of musical emotion and learned interactions with our surroundings." (Ibid.) Modes of listening vary not only according to the type of music being played and the musical situation but also in the type of

subjectivity that a particular culture has fostered in relation to musical events. We may listen to music in a particular way without thinking about it, while these listening styles are learned through unconscious imitation of our surroundings and those with whom we continually interact.

Ethnomusicologist Jonathan Shannon (2006), in his ethnographic study of aesthetics and emotionality of Arab classical (urban) music in the Syrian city of Aleppo, argues that the authentic subjectivity and collective identity among the Syrian artists and intellectuals are highly impacted by the aesthetic practices such as music and the social worlds based on the dichotomy of "authentic and inauthentic" meaning as "true and false." (Ibid., xvi) Focusing on the "aesthetics of authenticity" and sonic dimensions of cultural modernity in the Aleppine contemporary performances of Arab classical music, he emphasizes that the authenticity of music performance is not centralized in its formal authenticity, but in its oriental spirit (*ruh sharqiyya*) and *tarab* in which artists creativity draw upon their traditional training. Shannon brings the importance of transmitting and cultivating aesthetic understanding and emotion into the Syrian discourse of authenticity and its broader context for modernity.

In a different approach toward the "aesthetics of authenticity", Timothy Mitchell (1994) studies the traditional style of flamenco music and the diverse ideologies that have shaped its musical, moral, and aesthetic behavior rooted in a set of traditional lyric forms and turbulent emotions called *cante hondo* or deep song. Mitchell focuses on the emotional dynamics of flamenco fiesta in connection to Spanish class society with ideological and

aesthetic aspects of trauma and ethnogenesis in dual contexts such as folk and art music. He emphasizes both its folkloric and elite contexts of sociohistorical and ideological factors.

Further exploring the ideological factors of emotional aesthetics, ethnomusicologist Lila Ellen Gray focuses on the education of affect in Lisbon's fado music in the context of urban places and history. Gray highlights the power of "aesthetic form or genre" (Gray 2013, 5) through which the knowledge of expressing the performing body, musical sound, memory habits, and inventive improvisation is transmitted. She investigates intriguing aspects regarding genre and aesthetic context. For instance, how a particular affect links to expressive styles and sounds that become aesthetically and socially salient (saudade in the case of fado); and how through learning to listen and sing, one might learn how to feel and develop a repertoire for emotional expression. In fado's pedagogies of the soulful sound, "places teach one how to listen to fado, how to feel saudade, and teach one how to have a soul." (Ibid., 27) Studying the poetics of listening, multiple indexical meanings, and intertextual continuum of expression, Gray tracks the technologies and ideologies of voicing, their formation, and circulations as *stories* in the social, historical, and corporal dynamics of the genre in Lisbon's fado.

With a different view on history and emotion, Martin Stokes (1992) studies the *Arabesk* urban genre in Turkey with its aesthetics and cultural bounds with the turbulent emotions of lovers who are doomed to solitude and a violent end. He focuses on sentiments of performance and the social and political context of building it as a language of the inner self. Analyzing numerous metaphors of fate, love, and self in the textual culture of mobility and solitude in the lyrics and musical structure of *Arabesk*, the discourse of Turkish *hal* is

described in the dramatic sense present in modern Turkish society. Stokes sets up the scholarly journey through questions of musical system and technique, lyrics and narratives, and the musical organization of rhythm and modality. He works on the distinction of *sema* (Sufi dance and musical tradition) as the music of spheres in the socio-political context. Also focusing on the conceptual aspects of performance, Ali J. Racy (2003), in his study of *ṭarab* culture in the Arab world, investigates "ecstasy" in performance and lyrics through the musical and textual elements such as ornamentations, individuality, and modality as well as the lyrical themes and narratives of love.

However, ethnomusicologist Denise Gill, in her study of affect and melancholy in Turkish classical music, conducts a different approach in the form of "rhizomatic interpretation" that "resists binaries and offers us a way to conceptualize knowledge production in multiple, non-hierarchical lines." (Gill 2017, 2) Through this extensive view, Gill includes the rhizomes of classical music: the repertoire, the practice of affect, the Islamic roots, the melancholic state and the healing soul, the sound of separation, genealogies, and the historical frames of the socio-political reforms. This view defines a non-reducible approach as if broken at any point, a rhizome will sprout anew long old lines or new channels. Through her ethnographic study of musical training, especially in terms of the master-apprentice relationship, she explains the roles of the master, the lineage, and the notation, which are unique both in terms of the structural method and the scope of training traditions of affect.

Notably, these methods of close participant observation of the musicians' educational path make this type of research highly engaging in ethnomusicology. However, they have been

conducted mainly by non-native scholars (e.g., Nettl, Caton, Gill, Stokes, Gray) who shaped

and shared their bimusicality in a process different from that of native ethnomusicologists.

Apparently, in the case of affect cultures, native scholars typically avoid or overlook the

importance of these detailed and methodological approaches, which may be due to their

affiliation with these cultures from an insider's perspective. Thus, ethnomusicological

studies on the topics of aesthetic education and the affect remain far from research

diversity. The most comprehensive ethnographic work by an Iranian scholar regarding

musical education goes back to Khaleqi's *History of Iranian Music in the 1950-60s* (in

Persian), through which he included his own experiences of interactions with musicians,

masters, and Iranian society. Although not authored in the contemporary standard method

of ethnomusicology discipline, this three-volume history remains one of the most profound

ethnographic studies of the native musical culture by an Iranian researcher.

To bring more of the native voice, these studies necessitate the researcher to take the

participant observation as a process of becoming and analyzing the culture in which they

have grown up locally and became experts by firsthand experience without necessarily

being researcher-scholar. In this type of research, it is easier to find the "rhizomatic

connections" as Denise Gill (2017) offered, rather than trying to interpret certain cultural

elements to non-native readers. In this necessity, I offer many personal conversations,

interviews, autoethnography, and the elements of cultural imagery and imagination

directly into my participant observation as a native scholar. Subjectivity and encultured

interpretation are necessary parts of research on musical affect. This subjectivity, as a

perception of aesthetics and emotion, is the quality that Ellen Gray searches for in the

places of nostalgia and urban history attached to fado's affect. Within Iranian society, the

subjectivity partly lies within the poetics of joyful love and suffering, which directly or indirectly connect them to the interpretation of an aesthetic quality in music.

Another aspect of subjectivity and agency is the human experience of music education as a musical life together, which is prioritized in ethnographic research. In music training, especially of the Iranian *maktab* tradition presented in this thesis, the generalized discourse is built upon the exchange of master-student's subjectivities. Due to its individualistic nature and styles, Iranian *maktab* is not bound to tight structures and forms of pedagogy. There are "aesthetic authenticities," as Shannon (2006) mentioned, which are defined in each *maktab* by the teacher and *maktab's* legacy. One of the substantial studies on the immersion into the local voice is Regula Burckhardt Qureshi's monograph *Master Musicians of India: Hereditary Sarangi Players Speak* (2007) on the importance of the hereditary tradition of Indian music by sarangi players. Through a chain of interviews and learning sessions, the author focuses on her principal *sarangi* teacher and his family. Qureshi's research presents the social status and hierarchies of the musicians, the performing generations' diversity, the instrument, and the social changes through the eyes of *sarangi* performers through close interviews that are not explained in this capacity otherwise. Additionally, the book highlights the fundamental aspect of ethnomusicology that says "the subject under investigation is music, and the views of its practitioners (the 'folk view') take precedence over those of outside scholars." (Sorrell 2008, 124) Qureshi's study presents a wealth of information incorporated with the genuine wisdom that Indian musicians share as blessing as well as the problems of sarangi's unstandardized techniques and addressing some of the sensitive social issues. Qureshi's study brings out the social issues through immersion with multiple individual voices of the *sarangi* culture.

The individualized aspects of Iranian music training are intertwined with the time and society of *maktabs* and the frame of subjectivity that has been developed within them. Thus, doing this type of research involves bringing the voices of individualism and personal interpretations representing themselves as many mosaics coexisting independently and shaping a larger shared unity.

Through this experience, I try to bring multiple voices of subjectivities regarding emotion and aesthetics in *maktab* training. These voices, although self-standing, can lead to a larger and more dynamic image of affect in the Iranian music culture. For instance, during my interviews and conversations with musicians, I realized that not all of them used the word "sorrow" for the melancholic ardor in Persian musical expression. This diversity happened at times, even though we were talking about the same emotional and aesthetic quality as the source of joy, what I heard and prefer to call "*qam-e shirin*" (sweet sorrow). Depending on their individual notions of aesthetic emotion, some avoid the word sorrow for its reference to "discomfort" or "pain" in the psychological sense. They may call it beauty, depth, *suz* (burning), *ehsasi* (passionate), or aesthetics in general. On the contrary, some musicians highlight the meaning of sorrow and *huzn* as poetic elements of emotion defined in the larger context of 'erfan.' This diversity of subjectivity applies to other fundamental concepts regarding this research to which I deliberately give enough space for inclusion. I let them represent themselves without pre-theorized scholarly homogeneity or standardization. In my understanding, it is through their unresolved diversity and multiplicity that they nurture the fundamental nuances of a local culture. Among these words are *isalat* (authenticity), *sunnat* (tradition), *zibaei* (beauty, sublime), Persian *zehniat*

(philosophizing), and even the concept of *maktab* (schools of artistry and intellect). Among them, the latter is one of the main concepts of this research.

Over the past two centuries, the pedagogy of Iranian classical music has been bound to its "aesthetic form and genre" in Gray's terms (2013) as an urban court music that has defined the expressive styles and sound through the *maktab* genealogy and emotional intertextuality of the poetic content. Contrary to most of the previous studies (Meyer 1956; Simonton 2010; Juslin & Timmers 2010), which shared relatively essentialized views on the emotional modes of expression in world cultures through a comparative analysis of Western music aesthetics, my research explores the locally arranged philosophical establishment of poetics and (ethno)aesthetics of love and sorrow in *'erfan* (Persian Shi'a mysticism).

Many Persian textual resources have focused on the valorization of sorrow as a source of wisdom, forbearance, and philosophical contemplation, especially in the Sufi poetry by Hafez, Attar, and Rumi whose works share deep theosophical connections with divinity in Medieval Persian philosophy theorized or influenced especially by Ikhwan al-Safa, Ghazali, Avicenna, and Suhrawardi (Bruijin 1997; Knysh 2000; Azadehfar 2016). Also, a more human-centric concept of the mystical "love, separation, and union" (Karimi-Hakkak 2013) has been widely symbolized and transmitted through the narrative metaphors of popular romantic tragedies such as *Yusuf and Zulaikha* (based on Quranic verses) and especially by the prominent Persian poet Nizami[12] Ganjavi in his most widely known romances of *Leily-o Majnoun*, and *Khosro-va Shirin*, and numerous tragedies of the *Shahnameh* epics by

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[12] Also Nezami Ganjavi

Ferdowsi (Surdykowska 2014; 2019). In addition to the thematic role of mystic love, the contextual theme of dominant forms in Persian poetry, especially *masnavi*, *Saqi-nameh* (Khazraei 2018), and *ghazal,* focus on the ethical and lyrical aspects of love and morality. They have established the foundation of *radif* material, structure, and aesthetics. Many elements of the *radif* repertoire and *dastgah* system are associated with the poetics of love and *huzn* in Persian poetry. Through the dominance of listening and imitation in *maktab* pedagogy and the dominant role of the master, pupils are guided toward developing their *zowq* and aesthetic expression.

Research Methodology

For any research, especially within the broad and variable range of aesthetic and emotional qualities of a nation's art music, generalizing and categorizing the paradigms and parameters is needed to some extent. In this research, I tried to focus on suggesting categories and defining their qualities. In the case of aesthetics and philosophy, especially in the domain of the centuries-old Persian Empire, countless concepts and terms overlap or are shared with the Arab, Turkish, Pre-Islamic Zoroastrian Persia, and other Middle Eastern cultures due to the circulation of power, the authority of language and cultural exchange. Many terms (e.g., hal, huzn, suz) are common in these cultures, with definite or indefinite roots with specific meanings and contexts. In this study, my intention is not to track their roots or evolution. Instead, my focus, especially in Chapter 2, is on the intellectual backgrounds or comparisons that make them understandable or discussible in Persian music and culture. This purpose stands for the diversity of views by philosophers and thinkers of this vast multicultural region. Moreover, it should be remembered that

musical emotion is never defined, recognized, or applied tightly compared to other aesthetics.

The methodology for this dissertation includes consulting secondary sources, a close reading of poetry, and textual analysis of selected pieces from the *radif* repertoire as well as ethnographic study through my field interviews with a number of musicians. I also add my autoethnographic experiences, observation of maktab music learning as a longtime music student, and pedagogical analysis of historical and archival recordings of several masters' live teachings. My analytical approach to the Persian *radif* repertoire focuses on poetic and structural relationships between the musical and lyrical texts (including poetry divans and old treatises), which are prominent in both instrumental and vocal aspects of *radif*. Much of my pedagogical analysis and comparisons are based on the oral history shared with me through interviews with master musicians, depicted in historical resources including publications, archival material, biographical narratives, and my pedagogical observations in the form of my reflective narratives of *maktab* learning experience under prominent masters for fifteen years.

Analysis (Musical, Textual)

A part of my discursive analysis of sorrow in Iranian classical music focuses on the relation between musical and textual content of the classical repertoire—with the centrality of *radif* (instrumental and vocal) and the intertextuality of the mystic love in Persian classical poetry, which is known as the basis of interpretation and meaning in Persian arts including music. With its history of vocal centrality, Persian classical music shares many metaphoric, narrative, rhetorical, structural, and thematic similarities and allegories with Persian

poetry and literature, which defines the aesthetic frames. By concentrating on selective examples from the *radif* repertoire (e.g., *masnavi, Leily Majnoun, Hazin, Suz-o Godaz, Jameh-daran, Gham-angiz*) and their structure, theme, and content derived from Persian poetry and literature, I analyze the intertextuality of "love, separation, and sorrow" in Persian Sufi and mystic poetry that works as a semantic and emotional reference and aesthetic approach for the Persian performers. I show how this poetic understanding frames the interpretation of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, dynamics, ornamentation, and expression based on the structure and themes of Persian mystic poetry.

Ethnography

a) Interviews

The interviews were arranged with twelve professional musicians, including *maktab* masters who taught music for approximately three decades and a few young musicians in their mid-20s to late 30s who had professional music education (mostly in renowned *maktabs*) and are currently active musicians and teachers. Due to the dispersed locations of some of my interlocutors outside of Iran and the barriers of traveling to Iran due to the Covid 19 pandemic and safety issues during and in the aftermath of the *Woman, Life, Freedom* movement, most interviews were conducted online. The interviews were arranged as informal recorded sessions through which I asked questions or opened conversations with the interviewees. They explained their opinions, their musical biography regarding *maktab* learnings, and the process of their *maktab* experiences, from past learning to current teaching practices. In order to gain a more thorough and focused overview of the opinions and discussions in this qualitative methodology, the number of interlocutors was maintained limited to twelve. The accessibility issues (especially in Iran)

also limited the number of interviewees. However, the preference was given to connect to the musicians I had met and interacted with in person when I lived in Iran to approximate a more holistic fieldwork experience. Based on the relevance to the topic, I also used some of my recorded interviews[13] with master musicians from my previous studies on music education and musicians' individualized styles in 2016.

Learning and teaching Iranian music is a subtle process where the master barely talks directly about what should be done and how it should be done regarding emotions and aesthetics. Some clues are embedded within the content of the repertoire and its interpretation that should be comprehended gradually through master-disciple interactions. Many teachers try to lead their students in nurturing their own common sense of aesthetics so they can come up with free and individualized choices on what and how to highlight for an affective performance.

The master's method, in many cases, is an ideal model for students. However, my interviews show that teachers have different expectations and (sometimes) methods for each student based on their potential of *zowq*, enthusiasm, experience, and emotional perception and expression. As a result, there is no formulation or direct answer to how these aspects are taught or directed. Accordingly, my interviews focused on sharing examples of what and how each interlocutor gradually gained their skills and understandings of musical affect withing Persian aesthetics in the classroom. The interviews consist of three main parts: 1) The interviewee's reflective sharing of the biographical experiences through the *maktab* learning process over the years; 2) The style

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[13] These interviews were done in Iran conducted by the author as field study for the Masters' thesis.

and methods of the teacher(s), commentaries on their influences, and—if necessary—comparison with the interviewee's own teaching style after *maktab* graduation; 3) direct questions regarding the performance of *hal* or *ehsasi*, related aesthetic elements, and the ethos of sorrow in Iranian music. While the detailed and complementary questions may vary from case to case, the main questions were kept the same for all the interlocutors. Samples of questions in each category are shared as the following:

1) Biography and past experiences of *maktab*: When and how did you start your *maktab* education? Who was your teacher? How was the teaching style and your master-student relationship? If you had multiple teachers, how would you compare their teaching styles and personalities? What does your *maktab* mean to you professionally and emotionally?

2) Pedagogical methods, styles, and aesthetic appreciation: Regarding emotions, which aspects of performing carry the aesthetic depth for you? How do you define *hal* or *ehsasi* in performance? How did you find it in your master's teachings? How do you introduce it to your pupils? To what extent do you think your *maktab* repertoire implants the affective quality of aesthetics in your pupils' approach? How do you transmit these approaches to your pupils? How did you train yourself to achieve the skills for *ehsasi* performance? What was your teacher's style in leading you throughout the process?

3) Views of the *ehsasi* and aesthetic expression: What aspects of *hal* or *ehsasi* sound more important to you in performance? Do you consider non-musical factors engaging in developing *hal* and its transmission by the performer? Do you think that all abilities of performing *ehsasi* are obtainable through education, or are there some intuitive and genetic aspects?

It is noteworthy that the answers to some questions were included in others, and some of them were prioritized due to the limits of time accessibility and preferences of the interviewees. The names of the interviewees are not revealed. However, their expertise and *maktab* are indicated for the analytical and comparative approach. In many cases, I have precisely transcribed and translated excerpts of their remarks within my analysis, while in other instances, I have explained and paraphrased or summarized their notions for the analytical needs of this research. Also, when many musicians shared a view, I have used plural forms such as "In my interviews, many of musicians mentioned …" or "this point was highlighted by many of my interlocutors" or "all my interlocutors mentioned the importance of … ." Notably, not all musicians had the same terminology and emphasis on the components of my topic such as *hal*, *ehsasi, zibaei* (aesthetics), for which I made adjustments and clarifications according to their personal views.

b) Auto-Ethnography

A significant part of my field study is based on the autoethnography of my own musical education of nearly fifteen years as an Iranian performer of Persian *santur* in the distinguished *maktab* of *Ostad* Faramarz Payvar (also known as *Maktab Saba-Payvar*) under his most prominent students as well as my observations of other masters' experiences of self-cultivation and training.

Among the qualitative research approaches in humanities, autoethnography is a unique method that includes ethnography, self-study, and narrative inquiry. According to social scientists Hughes and Pennington, "autoethnography is similar to approaches such as ethnography, narrative inquiry, self-study, and hermeneutics. Each examines how people

understand relationships between humans and their sociocultural contexts." (Hughes and Pennington 2017, 6) The researcher's autoethnography can form the methodology, defining the boundaries and structure of inclusion for the voices of subjectivity, the researcher's enclosure of the study *per se,* and the oral history in which they engage from various perspectives. In the study of music education and any aspects of musicking, mainly based on the researcher's learning, interactions, and musical and human exchanges, autoethnography enriches the representation of the resources and the subject from various perspectives that remain unexplored otherwise.

In the case of Iranian music training and aesthetics of emotion in performance, my autoethnography of *maktab* and analysis of narrative recollections stand distinctively from the *reflexive turn* in the ethnomusicology of the 1980-90s during which the moral and ethical aspects of research were critiqued and became a concern of social scientist regarding their abilities of being objective. As a native musician trained and worked within this musical culture, I bring formative experiences of autoethnography as writing *in tradition*. This aspect of using autoethnography as a methodology differentiates my study from the use of autoethnography as a method. My autoethnography as a methodology applies to my active engagement of subjectivity in the process of learning, feeling, discovering *hal*, ethic cultivation, participating, exchanging interpretations with the teachers, and writing, which is distinct from autoethnography as a method concerning the tools and techniques of collecting data and observation. As Hughes and Pennington (2017, 11) state, "Centering the story of the self and focusing exclusively on narrations and descriptions of personal experience are the hallmark of autoethnographic studies, yet the studies vary widely in their level of description of the methods used." As I mentioned

earlier in this chapter, my methodology of autoethnography is based on the voice within the tradition under my study, which had not been presented comprehensively in this form before.

Through my narrative, I reflect on the pedagogical methods and traditions of gradual learning experience from an early to an advanced level. This narrative includes recollections of various learning stages, from encountering and curiosity regarding *hal* as an amateur in the classroom, followed by comprehending its aesthetic values and frames, connecting with the individualized styles of *ostad's* pedagogy, to the eventual acquisition of the skills and knowledge of aesthetic and affect in an advanced level. Due to the gradual quality of aesthetic education and length of training in a *maktab*, I find my years of continuous training in the past and reflective analysis of my recent teachings to other students beneficial to my field study. When necessary, this autoethnography includes my experiences of live concerts, masterclasses, and interactive events through which I observed or received further education of aesthetics and affect in addition to ordinary classroom learning.

Archives

A portion of my aesthetic and pedagogical analysis relies on several rare and unreleased documentaries and interviews of the prominent *maktab* teacher-performers in the early to mid-20th century. While some of these rare videos may have been broadcast on Iranian national TV or radio before the 1979 revolution, they have not been widely seen or consulted over the past forty years due to the lack of accessibility and media censorship in

Iran. I gathered some of these recordings through shared private or personal archives and social media for my analytical purposes. I also compare them with my own interviews.

Many of these AV programs were produced during the Pahlavi period or before the dominance of the Islamic Republic's power. After the regime change in 1979, most of the music programs of the previous era were banned, eliminated, or dismissed from the media and public access. While there is no official and formally accepted archive or institution for claiming and dissemination of these valuable historical and ethnographic materials in Iran, many of them have been digitized, collected, and shared on social media through the efforts of private owners, some non-Iranian archives (e.g., *The Golha Programmes* at York University Digital Library), and foreign satellite channels (i.e., BBC Persian, manoto TV, VOA). I consulted these examples during the ethnographic and analytical aspects of my research to form a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of aesthetics, emotion, and pedagogy. These resources present a broad sense of the knowledge and methods shared by the most acclaimed musicians and their students during the historical era, which underwent fundamental changes and reformations due to the Islamic Republic's policies after the 1979 revolution.

Research Layout

This dissertation is comprised of seven chapters:

In Chapter One (the current chapter), I introduce the centrality and experience of *hal* and *ehsasi* performance in a music classroom. I have shared my reflective narrations of how *hal* and its components are appreciated and encountered through a music learner's eyes on the way to cultivating the aesthetic understanding under a *maktab* teacher. Based on an

overview of some related studies and methods and approaches through which ethnomusicologists worked on various dimensions of aesthetics of sorrow and music education.

Chapter Two explores the terminology of *hal* as a discursive concept and its elements of sorrow. Through interdisciplinary studies of various resources in history, Persian and Islamic philosophy, Persian literature and mysticism, and musical references, along with shared terminology in some related musical and Sufi cultures, I introduce the conceptual frame of *hal* and the vast terminology interconnected with music and affect of *huzn* in Persian culture. I show how the word "*hal*" carries a wide range of general and specifically context-related meanings in Persian culture that intersect with each other more deeply in the interpretive aspects of music, poetry, and mystic philosophy.

Chapter Three discusses the legacy and structural system of *maktab*, its aesthetic and ethical framework in the training of *hal*. Through ethnographic examples, I describe the web of human connection within which the *maktab* is formed through master-disciple relationships, pedagogical lineage, and listening traditions. I show how the *maktab* system works effectively with concepts in Sufism and poetic philosophy and forms a hierarchical yet pervasive tradition.

In Chapter Four, I analyze the poetic and musical elements of sorrow in the *radif* repertoire. Through musical, visual, and literary examples, I examine the thematic, rhythmic-metric, and interpretive interconnection of sorrow in Persian poetry with the music of the *radif*. The second part of this chapter includes numerous ethnographic examples and discussions collected from my field interviews. Finally, I offer an elaborate comparative analysis of

pedagogical methods by a selected number of master musicians taken from old documentary films. I also compare some of their pedagogical aspects with my autoethnographic observations and my interlocutors' views.

In Chapter Five, I discuss the socio-historical dimensions of genre, class, and aesthetics in Iranian classical music and their impact on the emergence of female agency and women's musicianship in Iran. I explore how the historical and present choices and limitations in Iran's socio-political, religious, and cultural context have shaped the aesthetics of sorrow as a distinctive element of a musical genre and social class. By presenting historical cases of female musicians' agency and sharing my autoethnographic experiences as a female ensemble leader, performer, and educator, I analyze how women navigate the music system, particularly in the art music of Iran, and how they develop their agency inside that system.

Chapter Six argues the division of *maktab* ideologies in the mid-20th century with a particular focus on the Vaziri-Saba *Maktab,* which happened through the new state institutionalization and dissemination of traditionalist views led by musicians such as Dariush Safvat and Noor-Ali Borumand. Their views stood opposite to the modernist *maktabs* of Vaziri and Saba. Exploring the biographical, musical, and pedagogical history of the influential musicians during this movement, I argue that the discourse of authenticity and its diverse definition through *maktab*, especially after *Ostad* Saba, formed new contrasts and dichotomic pedagogies in contemporary music education of Iran.

Chapter Seven provides a review of the main discourses and the analytical points based on ethnographic research and field interviews. I discuss how the elements of the music

repertoire and practice along with the poetics of sorrow, are essential factors of aesthetic education in *maktab* traditions within the larger socio-political frames of contemporary Iran.

Back to Hal in the Classroom: Joining the Cosmos

After listening to a student's performance and making corrections, *Ostad* Aliheidari plays a new piece with rare glimpses at the music sheet in front of the *santur* table. Every lesson must be memorized precisely from the book, although *Ostad* usually adds ornamentations, *chashni* (flavors), and his improvisatory touch, making the piece one of his own. When taking their lesson, the students were not to overwhelm themselves with the notation during *Ostad*'s playing but only to watch and listen to his music. "Be here, with me," he recommends as he starts playing. In fact, his virtuosic skills and personal interpretation made the ambiguity of Persian musical notation more versatile and adventurous. In our experience as students, no matter what *Ostad* played, the room was filled with a thoughtfully and hypnotically inviting and expressive atmosphere in which we could easily drown ourselves and lose track of time. Effortlessly, we were overcome in a subtle way by the insightful emotionality of the 'mood-and-moment' and found ourselves in a restrained and mute non-physical and almost mystic feeling of time and space. Every pupil or audience is entitled to a personal description of the experience I call "*alam*[14]," which

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[14] It can be also translated as "universe" or "world" (e.g. *ālam-e khākī* as the earthly world, and *ālam-e bālā* as the heavenly world) or in more general sense. However, I purposefully choose "the cosmos" for the special affective, non-tangible and pervasive modal context to which I am referring and the metaphoric style of thinking—as in Persian literature—I am applying in this description. For the same reason I use "metaphoric sanctum" which refers to a non-physical sense of serenity and source of pleasure in the cosmos. This interpretation is subjective and as I mentioned, it may vary among different listeners.

translates as "the cosmos." It is a metaphysical sanctum, highly modal[15] yet overwhelming,

where all the outer surroundings would fade away in dismal. This cosmos was my

experience as if floating on gray ecstatic shades of a space with no gravity. At times, *Ostad*

closed his eyes as he shook his head gently while playing with various musical dynamics.

This slight body movement was customary for his joyous, melancholic[16] , and meditative

exploration. I remember my encounter with the emotional quality of those moments

passing through the artistry of *hal*—as a typical example of the experience that I prefer to

describe more faithfully in a metaphoric tone of writing, followed by my simple English

translation[17]:

عالَمِ حال

عالَمِ حال/هال، رخساری خیال انگیز اما آشنا داشت

ترنم اشکهای چو مروارید، نت به نت از صدف گونه های سنتور میغلتید

و به مثال شبنم صبح جان را تازه میکرد

خلوتی ژرف از موسیقی برای خلسه و تأمل

نغمات محو میشد رها از بندهای زمین، آن "غمِ آشنا" گاه در سایه روشن مه آلود

وگاه در میانهٔ بستر حقیقی و خیال انگیزی از پیکرِ زمان و مکان تاب میخورد.

از میوه های حُزن؛ عالمِ باغ را تلخي شیریني بود

و نسیم سوزناک دلتنگی که نجواگر نغمهٔ مرغان عاشق بود؛

جویبارِ نامیرای شنیدن و آموختن، حضور را از لذت سیراب میکرد.

امواج حریر مضراب های استاد بی تقلا ساحلِ سینهٔ سنتور را در آغوش میکشید

و میرقصید به مانند قلم موی آبرنگ بر بوم

و میخرامید چنانکه گویی نوای ساز، او را با خود میکشاند

و بر افقِ کهکشانی بیکران غوطه ور میساخت...

---

[15] relating to mode or form as opposed to substance

[16] Melancholy is part of the joyful experience. It is the sorrow that is (implicitly) considered sweet in Iranian music.

[17] It is notable that the English translation fails to fully deliver the sentiment and metaphoric rhyme of my description (as in Persian poetics). Yet, it has been offered to give an overall sense to the English reader.

The cosmos, Hal

The "cosmos" had a wistful face, though intimate; with each drop of his mezrab, pouring pearls of tears from the shells of santur's cheeks into the moment; a familiar essence of captivating sorrow and mystic subtlety flowing through the sounds, yet it was invigorating. Secluded from the earthly senses, that essence faded out in the melodic melancholy of twilight when swinging in a cradle between both real and illusive faces of time and space. The cosmos was a garden flourished by the bitter-sweet fruits of huzn (sadness) and the nostalgic breeze of suz (burning) in the heart as whispering birds' love melodies among them ...

The further I stepped in the humble stream of knowledge and acquaintance, the deeper those bitter-sweet fruits of the garden quenched my thirst and filled my presence with ecstasy. The silky waves from Ostad's mezrabs (strokes) gently embraced the shore of his santur's chest. They bounced as the watercolor brush danced on the canvas. Soon, it was not Ostad playing this music, but the music flying him through and keeping him floating at the horizons of the misty "cosmos." The cosmos was "in the moment," floating with us around an invisible orbit ...

What was this spatial existence embedded in *Ostad*'s masterful performance? What was the technical and spiritual sense of this intense "authentic" quality that I could imagine as secluded yet inclusive as "the cosmos"? These questions built up the focus of my attention and curiosity around the aesthetics and expressions of this music. As a young pupil, I barely found precise words to define it, yet I realized my instant curiosity and attraction—as a seeker—to learn and pursue this ethos and its specific depth and artistry.

Although sounding effortless, *Ostad*'s virtuosic playing with a broad range of dynamics, ornamentations, variations, rests, and timings for the sentences required not only a vast knowledge of the repertoire, the temporal balances, and performing skills but also his own *zowq* and instantaneous mood for creating the *hal* in its (authentic) sensibility. It was a combination of structural proficiency and expressive articulation of this music. *The cosmos* also needed proper attention and trained listening to be perceived, appreciated, and engaged with deeply. Keeping patience and the urge while learning to enjoy this artistry was an essential requirement. As I gradually learned, this was one of the purposes of a collective class setting and a focused listening appreciation within the pedagogy of traditional *maktabs*. It also had to be cultivated and matured through years of constant learning and self-improvement based on the students' *zowq* and emotional capacity.

CHAPTER TWO

Hal and Poetics of Sorrow

Ecstasy of Sorrow: Terminology, Poetics, and Philosophy

Before defining the terminology of *hal* and its aesthetic and emotional components in contemporary Iran, it is necessary to note the vast semantic range of Persian terms that often apply to both general and specific contexts. The semantic scope of a term, even if very common or generalized, is often beyond a single scholarly realm. Due to the history of liberal arts education in Persia and the cultural and scientific exchanges in its vast multilingual territories (i.e., Arabic and Turkic), each term—even in its modern use—is bound to various levels of historical, scientific, philosophical, cultural, and multifocal meanings. This aspect of diversity was sometimes linked closely to neighboring cultures (such as Arab, Byzantine, and Turkish) through relative factors such as the centrality of power, language, and religion, as it happened during the Islamic conquest and dissemination. Other times, it stood distinct from neighbors through new paradigms of identity, local power, and culture, as happened to Persian culture and language after the settlement of Islamic Shi'a power in Iran under Safavids[18].

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[18] After Abbasid (750-1258), the Safavid kingdom (1501-1736) is the height of Persian ruling on Iran in the Islamic era. One of the reasons for officialization of Shi'ism by the king of Safavid was indeed to distinguish his power from

Additionally, the metaphoric function is often amalgamated with a term's general or social use due to the characteristics and normalized dominance of Persian poetic language in many aspects of life and science. As I will discuss later in this chapter, a word such as *hal*, or *zowq* is relatively open to its multifaceted philosophical, esoteric, scientific, and poetic realms of semantics, even if it is used in a general or daily situation. The range and levels of meanings—sometimes hidden, requiring deeper delving—should be recognized through the context and purpose of its application. This characteristic in Persian language and culture, as in some other languages, highlights the recurring complex and multifaceted concepts open to interpretation in Iranian daily life and makes the specified definition and decomposition of these terms in science more challenging.

Furthermore, due to the central significance of Persian literature and poetics interconnected with philosophy, cosmology, and arts, a word *per se* in contemporary use is encapsulated by vast contextual and metaphoric perceptions that form the intellectual concepts in arts, including music[19]. Thus, the reader needs to note the dichotomy of the general and specified semantics for the exhaustive yet defining ambiguity of Persian terminology, frequently and customarily used by artists and music teachers. At the same time, their meta-meaning is partly appreciated by the student's exposure to the culture. Different teachers and musicians may disagree on the definition of a word or quality in music and even not favor limiting these qualities to words and definitions. A deeper understanding of these concepts is developed through music training without necessarily

the rest of the Arab monarchy in the vast Sunni world of Islam. Both periods helped more centralized dissemination of Persian customs in the Islamic Iran and world.

[19] This is a characteristic of the terms used in art and poetry (e.g., beauty). However, here I mean that in Persian language most of the ordinary words are bound to their poetic and multifocal meanings.

being explicitly mentioned or transmitted verbally in scientific or philosophical contexts. Instead, the language of poetry and understanding the literature, including the metaphors, are the closest mediums to the purpose of music. In this chapter, I try to define and clarify some related key concepts, terms, and historical background based on the textual definitions and the ordinary use.

Hal (Meditative State)

The concept of *hal*[20](literally: state of feeling or condition) in Persian, as many other terms with dual implications, stands for (at least) two distinct meanings depending on the context: First, the physical or the materialistic meaning, which implies how a person feels physically. It symbolically refers to *zaher*[21] (outside appearance or state) in Persian philosophy. Second, the emotional or non-materialistic (or spiritual) state refers to how a person feels internally in the heart. By spiritual specification, the latter is called *baten* (inside appearance or condition) in philosophical terms. However, in its more elaborative collocation, "*hal-e del*" (*hāl* and state of the heart or inner-self) ranges from the instant mood of the moment (i.e., of a musical performance setting), the emotional status regarding romantic life or mental health, to the broader spectrum of "*hal-o hava-ye mellat/dowran*," the collective psychological state of a nation during a historical era. There are often dual faces of meanings that give depth and debate to the concepts in Persian arts and literature: a duality of the internal and the external, self and the other(s), deep and shallow, non-materialistic and materialistic, or earthly and heavenly. This dualism dominates the

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[20] Also in Arab language, culture, music, and the Islamic discourse and practice of Sufism.
[21] This word as many others within the context of Islamic mysticism and literature are shared in Persian, Arabic and some other languages in the Islamic world.

cosmology of ancient Persia—primarily through Zoroastrianism and, later, Islamic mysticism.

In addition to its general meanings, the poetic, philosophical, and aesthetic concept of *hal in Arabic also* refers to a historical connection centralized by the Islamic practices of *tassavuf* and mysticism. The *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* defines *hal* as a trance-like (voluntary or involuntary) condition of being used by Sufis to refer to the transitory spiritual state of enlightenment or ecstasy. Known as the "mystical state" (Knysh 2000, 132), *hal* is one of the prominent Sufi characteristics of *mushaheda* (close observation) in *kashf* or unveiling of the spiritual mysteries in which personal knowledge is a proof of *wajd* (ecstasy), and the *hal* condition attained.

By "ecstasy," Sufis refer to the state of yearning or momentary absorption in the Divine Beloved (Bilqies 2014, 70). In this meaning, *hal* is "a mental state gifted momentarily by divine grace" (Ibid) or a gift from God as opposed to *maqam* (mystical station), which is "the station of the mystical path" (Knysh 2000, 132) or an acquired stage that can be achieved through human effort. The historical evolutions and controversies, the determination of referent, the order, and the scope of *hal* and *maqam* are influential in the path and progression of the Sufis to the extent that the Medieval Sufi philosopher Qusheyri[22] points out the disagreement over the referents of these two terms as the cause of dispute between the Iraq and Khurasan schools of Sufism (Shaâbanzadeh 2012). Annemarie Schimmel (1975, 99) differentiates *hal* (state) from *maqam* (station) as a central part of the mystic's religious life in the practice of *shari'a* (the path), *tariqa* (the

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[22] Also Qushayri

action), *haqiqa* (the truth) and *ma'rifa* (gnosis) by defining *hal* as an inner state in the following sense,

> [...] Something that descends from God into a man's heart, without his being able to repel it when it comes, or to attract it when it goes, by his own effort" ... [while] the maqam is a lasting stage, which man reaches, to a certain extent, by his own striving ... [Thus,] it varies according to the capacity of the adept. [...]
>
> (Schimmel 1975, 99)

Focusing on *hal* (plural, *ahwal*)—the transitory mystical states—as a critical element in the theory of Sufism, Yahya Bakharzi, the author of *Fusus al-adab* and a significant figure of *Kubrawi tariqa* in Central Asian Sufism, defines *hal* as "the interaction (*mu'amala*) of the seeker's heart with God Most High: that is to say, those spiritual meanings (*ma'ani*) which by virtue of purity of acts of invocation descend upon his heart and are transformed into a mystical state within him." (Quoted in Waley 1999, 303) By brief definition of multiple levels of *hal* (*aḥwal*), Bakharzi[23] concludes that beyond the last state of "direct vision" (*mushahada*) there is a divine set of inspirations, visions and revelations which are not describable in words. In this meaning, the emphasis is on the transitory aspect of *hal* and the seeker's cultivation of the virtue of beauty.

According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, during the early periods of Persian Sufism, Sufi ethical training was combined with practical manuals on "*sayr* and *suluk*: that is, on both the inner spiritual voyage and the outer conduct of the Sufis." (Nasr 1999, 5) The various stages and

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[23] He mentions the order of levels as the following: "contemplation (*murāqaba*), nearness (*qurb*), love (*maḥabbat*), hope (*rajā*), fear (*khawf*), modesty (*ḥayā*), longing (*shawq*), intimacy (*uns*), serenity (*tama'nīna*) certainty (*yaqīn*), and finally direct vision (*mushāhada*).

states of the human soul, the mystical states (*ahwal*), and spiritual stations (*maqamat*) were extensively covered in the early practice of Persian Sufism.

However, it seems that the aesthetic reference to the meaning of *hal* in Iranian music is more inclined to a secular nature, although often framed ethically and, at many points, spiritually meditative, esoteric, and metaphysical—and an achievable state (as *maqam* in Sufism) by the artist. On the other hand, the creation of *hal* is ephemeral, and its occurrence is conditioned by elements such as time and space, place, and listeners' state and appreciation, which are not always in the performer's control.

Achieving the state of *hal* in Iranian music is praised and required as an element of affect and authentic advanced performance. Although not defined precisely in musical writings, prominent performers and teachers of Iranian music have emphasized the importance of *hal*—especially its subtle and aesthetic quality—in direct and indirect ways. In a documentary film (Tahami-nejad 1989) on the subtlety and aesthetics of Iranian music, Ahmad Ebadi, a prominent master of *radif* and *setar*, defines Iranian music simply as "the music of *hal*, but not of *qal*[24] (loud and extroverted in a flamboyant manner)." The subtle melancholy and meditative ethos quality Ebadi refers to is generally known as "sorrow" (*gham*). At the same time, professional artists consider it sublimity, *huzn* (a poetic word for sorrow), and an affective domain for the foundation of aesthetic authenticity.

Delving more deeply into the philosophical context, we find *hal* and *qal* among Sufism elements when formally presented to Islamic society as a science and tradition. Early Sufism was inclusive of both discursive literary expressions (*qal*) and direct spiritual

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[24] Also *ghal*

experience (*hal*), offering a formal methodology with specific potential for particular individuals' private and social needs, which was at times beyond the capacity of other followers (Mahdavi Damghani 1999, 38). This establishment extended Sufism beyond its former limitation only as a discourse and practice of ethics *(akhlaq)* and presented it as a multifaceted tradition. However, in Ebadi's musical advice (also partly common in colloquial and everyday language) from the perspective of a performer, the *hal* reference reemphasizes the artistry of '*amal* (performance, practice) in the subtlety of the spiritual experience rather than overrating oneself through descriptive speech and verbal exaggerations.

Regardless of its significant weight over the aesthetics of Persian music, the concept of *hal* has been barely defined or explained directly in the works of Iranian musicians and scholars of Persian music. Many performers and musicians believe that describing this concept is only reductionism to its multi-faceted depth, which stands beyond the theological frames of Sufism and its dynamic content of pathos. However, the concept has attracted the attention of some non-Iranian scholars of Persian music who have framed several definitions based on the philosophical aspects of music and details of performance. According to his study of Persian music aesthetics, ethnomusicologist Jean During describes *hal* in general and specific terms.

> In its general sense, ḥāl refers to a modality of the instant, and in its particular sense, to the physical, spiritual, or emotional state of a person. It is also an essential notion in Persian arts and especially Persian music, which is supposed to bring about a meditative state (ḥāl) in the artist as well as in the audience… One of the functions of music is to constitute a modality (ḥāl) and sociability, that is, an esthetical, poetical, and symbolical moment corresponding to a definition shared by an audience. By ḥāl, the innermost self finds itself as being part of a culture. In fact, it is the essence of being Persian that is defined by ḥāl.

(During in *Iranica* 2012)

Jean During emphasizes the fundamental aspects of *hal*, especially regarding the meditative state, which bridges a symbolic aesthetics between the performer and audience and its modality based on the performer's individualized interpretation of an inherited culture from the past. A part of the novelty in During's view of the concept lies in the enriched notion of sociability and communicative exchange in attachment to *hal*. The creation and aesthetic representation of *hal* has become an active identity builder among the Persian cultural agencies defined by time.

Yet, the concept of *hal* is open to various perspectives based on their focus on mystical, ethical, structural, and aesthetic views, including dogmatic and dynamic beliefs among Iranian musicians. This fact adds to the ambiguity—and perhaps attraction—of *hal* and its characteristics. Some traditionalist views by Iranian author-performers, namely Dariush Safvat, focus on the ethics and morality of *hal* "as an essential element […] the fruit of authenticity" (Safvat in During 1991), which neither can be described nor learned because it is mental and emotional. Conversely, many other musicians, such as Ebadi focus on the performative and affective aspects of philosophy without necessarily putting *hal* in a theological context. From a broader view of a Persian and Islamic cultural scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1971) describes musicians' *hal* as a kind of "getting out of one's physical self in order to attain a higher state of consciousness," the origins of which are to be sought in mysticism. According to Jean During, this notion corresponds to an idealization of esthetical emotion (*ṭarab*) or effect (ta'ṯir).

On the other hand, while the word *hal* with Arabic spelling as "حال" has long been shared in the mentioned concepts of Arab, Turkic, and Persian languages, its variety of spelling in Persian, including "هال" (*Dehkhoda Dictionary*) instead of "حال," which is less known to Iranians today, has been frequently used in the meaning of "solace or peace" in Persian poetry especially, the epics of *Shahnameh by* Ferdowsi. This relationship[25] between similar terminologies and analogous or transformational meanings, although yet to be proved, may add a new dimension to the connection between *huzn*, its subtlety, and pleasant sorrow in Iranian music.

Investigating the dichotomy of pedagogies regarding the aesthetic elements of affect and *hal* in Iranian music in Chapter 6, I show the contrasting definitions of *hal* and ethos of performance within the divisions of *maktabs* based on their followers' ideologies related to religion, mysticism, and musical practice. These divisions form two fundamental views and pedagogical directions of traditionalist and modernist training based on their distinctive teaching philosophy and frames of sacred versus secular practice in the 20th century. As ethnomusicologist Owen Wright emphasizes, in the study of modern Iran,

> One needs to take some account of the evolving complexities of a society where conflicting ideologies have not just competed for power, but have also offered rival views of the ethical evaluation of music and hence (to use a secular phraseology) have elaborated different agendas for the control of artistic policy.
>
> (Wright 2009, 1)

Although the concept of *hal* is deeply rooted in the mystic practice of Sufism and Persian literature, the social frameworks of modern Iran and the musicians' differing ideologies

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[25] Whether this difference is the result of the phonetic spelling or a different root needs more etymological and linguistic research which is beyond the scope of this research.

and responses to the changes, including modernity, power, and the voice of tradition,

brought contrasting layers to the interpretation of *hal*, aesthetic emotion, and their

transmission among music teachers. I examine this controversy in the *maktabs* of

Borumand-Safvat compared to Vaziri-Saba in Chapter 6.

Zowq (Artistic Talent and Taste)

Deriving from the context of Persian poetics, *zowq* (taste, talent) is a frequently used

concept in music, art, literature, and casual and colloquial conversation. According to

Domenico Ingenito's extended research on Persian medieval literature, especially of Sa'di's

works, "*ẕawq*" [*zowq*] (sublime sensation) in the analysis of Sa'di's poetry means a

"supernal sensation felt in the inner chambers of the heart." In Sa'di's view, "while God can

manifest Himself in the heart of the believer through the spiritual tasting, the believer can

infer his presence through the worldly manifestations of his acts of creation and his

attributes of splendor and majesty." (Ingenito 2021, 238). In Iranian music, *zowq* is often

described as intuitive and acquired musical taste elements. Quoting from Safvat (lectures in

1988) with a focus on the acquired quality of *zowq* through the understanding of *radif*

analogous to the development of poetic *zowq*, Jean During states,

> The development of what is known as taste *(zowq)* is very important and quite well
> known in Iranian poetry. It has always been said that a poet, in order to develop the
> taste necessary for composing verses of high quality, must first learn twenty or
> thirty thousand verses by poets of old. It is the same with music. Those who do not
> know the *radif* cannot have a refined, well-educated taste.

> (During et al. 1991, 216)

Safvat's view conveys the old tradition of developing a "flourishing" aesthetic and poetic

taste in the practice of Persian pedagogy, which, like many other aspects of Persian arts,

covers both objective and subjective trajectories of learning. The practice of this tradition

can be compared to the discursive references on the matter of *zowq* in Persian scholarship.

In his description of the required talents for the practice of music, the 10th-century

philosopher, scholar, and music theorist Abu-Nasr Farabi, whose works are frequently

cited in Iranian music scholarly works, considers two main elements for the creation of

music: 1) The ability of *zowq* and talent, and 2) the ability of wisdom. He extends to more

details by categorizing the 'wisdom ability' into the active and non-active based on their

roots of imagination in self-experience of authenticity. In addition to this distinction, Farabi

explains the human poetic intuition as one of the most important factors in creating *lahn*

(melody and a broader system of Iranian modality and its context) besides human's

tendency toward joy and relief from pain and suffering. He believes that our misery or

tiredness is rooted in moving and proceeding within the time frame. Thus, reducing the

sense of movement in time reduces the tiredness and misery of feelings and imagination.

Accordingly, the meaningful whisper of *tarannum* (sound) resolves the feeling of tiredness

during the activity. Giving more credit to vocal music compared to the instrumental, Farabi

points out that for *alhan* (singular: *lahn*, melodies) to be naturally affective to human

senses, they should be at least one of the three types: joyful *lahn*, passive *lahn*, or

imaginative *lahn*. While both joyful and passive *lahn* are beneficial in inspiring the

imaginative sense, the joyful *lahn* gives the most enchantment to the listener. Imaginative

lahn is comparable to the imagination in poetry and derives from vocal characteristics. In

Farabi's argument, when all three melodies are used in a *lahn*, it will be highly affective and

complete (Farabi 1991, 13, 22, 24 quoted in Azadehfar 2017, 10-11, translated by the

author)

My *Ostad*'s evaluation of *zowq* in pupils (including myself) at the beginner's level highlighted his notion of artistic taste and talent as an intuitive quality that must be recognized to be harvested by a music learner. He also included the training aspect of the required sense of aesthetics in his pedagogical *maktab* frames. Similarly, by the analogy of artistic development in poetry composition through education, Safvat also emphasizes the creative aspect of *zowq* and specifies qualitative levels in order to reach the "refined" and "well-educated" establishment. In music, he emphasizes the fulfillment of *zowq* through a deliberate and progressive understanding of the content and techniques of *radif* repertoire, which refers to higher levels of apprenticeship.

Wajd (Joy) and Haz (Ecstasy)

A term frequently applied in Persian as a deep sense of joy following the appreciation of a valuable literary or artistic work is *wajd*[26]. This word in Iranian music also has roots in Sufism and Persian poetry, although it is generally used in the Persian language among Iranians. According to Schimmel, "ecstasy" is the translation for *wajd.* It literally means "finding," as "to find God and become quiet and peaceful in finding Him. In the overwhelming happiness of having found Him, man may be raptured in ecstatic bliss." (Schimmel 1975, 178) Schimmel's other instances of definition describe ecstasy as a "flame" which "springs up in the secret heart and appears out of longing, and at that visitation (*warid*) the members are stirred either to joy or grief." (Kalābādhī 1935, 106 in Schimmel 1975, 178) The "flame" is also employed by Attar (1145-1221), the great Persian Sufi poet and theoretician:

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[26] Also *vajd*

"What is wajd? To become happy thanks to the true morning,
to become fire without the presence of the sun. (U41)"
(Attar 1959 in Schimmel 1975, 178-79)

This "flame" is also seen in other verses by Attar in *The Conference of the Birds* as a source

of ecstasy when caused by love:

<div dir="rtl">

عشق گوهر آتشی زد در دلم

بس بود این آتش خوش حاصلم

تفت این آتش چو سر بیرون کند

سنگ ریزه در درونم خون کند

</div>

Love gifted my heart a gem of blooming fire

To my ecstasy, that flame would be all

May the roasting flame come out of me,

All pebbles of my soul will turn to blood

(Attar, translated by the author)

In Sufism, *wajd* refers to finding. It is the attempt to find freedom from oneself by indulging

in singing, dancing, drugs, or outward means. These external means were connected to Sufi

practices and were criticized by the orthodox and moderate mystics. Ethnomusicologist A.J.

Racy (2003, 4) defines *wajd* as "religious ecstasy". As a reminiscence of attaining a higher

level of spirituality through *fana* or "mystical annihilation" in Sufism, the acquisition of

musical inspiration is shaped by the two notions of "surrender and empowerment" as

"annihilation and transcendence" that make the inspired singer becoming nothing but a

voice. (Racy 2003, 122-23) Projecting more on the spiritual-aesthetic context of music,

Racy also mentions musical ecstasy as the qualitative dualism of love in the song lyrics: a

combination of hope and despair, happiness and sadness, union and separation, pleasure and pain, a bitter-sweetness highlighted in the song lyrics where *wajd* is explicitly spoken to connote yearning or experiencing as a profound mystical state. "In the *tarab* lyrics, the concept of *wajd*, which refers to intense amorous longing and carries strong ecstatic overtones, is readily suggestive of the *tarab* condition." (Ibid, 178-180)

In Persian common usage, *wajd* is referred to the visible delight and obvious excitement revealed as a result of witnessing a profoundly joyful experience, scene, or meaning. Another Persian term for this concept in everyday use is "*haz*," also known as "حظ، حظّ وافر" especially among the musicians of the past few centuries (Khaleqi 2002). Both *haz* and *wajd* in Persian speaking are used as verbs describing a deep and visible sense of joy from experiences such as listening to music, poetry, recitation, and other forms of art representation. The experience of *wajd* may be implicit or demonstrated explicitly in commonly visible manners of the performer (and even the audience), such as nodding the head slightly, in sad moods, or closing the eyes, as my teacher expressed.

Huzn (Sorrow)

Huzn is among the most frequently used and referential words and concepts in Persian music literature and practice. For instance, I have heard expressions such as "*dastgah Dashti* has a *mahzun* (sorrowful, full of *huzn*) mood" or "his *avaz* (singing) voice has a sweet *mahuzn* timbre that captures hearts." These are common references to *huzn* as a melancholic beauty, with the first pointing to the mode, instrumental and vocal content, and melodies of *dastgah* Dashti and the way they are presented in performance and the

latter highlighting the lyrical, dark, mellow, and melancholic quality and color of voice as it usually resonates best with Iranian (trained) ears.

However, *huzn* has a discursive significance not only in Persian poetry and music but also in the broader cultural context of the Middle East. In her extended research on the art of Quranic recitation, ethnomusicologist Kristina Nelson defines *huzn* as "sorrow" or "grief" with various meanings, which is significant in understanding the ideal and a total experience of Quranic recitation. However, "*huzn* is not only some sort of emotional state which is expressed through weeping, but a quality, or even a technique, of reciting which reflects that state." (Nelson 2001, 89-100) Likewise, *huzn* is sometimes seen as a vocal technique rather than a state or emotion. Nelson adds that the necessity of reciting the Quran with sorrow (*huzn*) and a sad voice is also referrable in the history of early Arab songs' improvisation. There is an emphasis on the best reciter who recites the Quran with stimulation of grief. Thus, although the sentiment of sorrow is present in the concept of *huzn*, a definition of *huzn* as "sorrow" is inadequate in this context. In the sense of Quranic recitation as an artistic performance of the sacred, there is an aesthetic dimension in the concept of *huzn* that causes weeping by creating a sense of delicacy and softness in the heart (*riqqah*). This characteristic is enriched by a melodious voice or recitation that "stirs the emotions." These are necessary to bring out and communicate the meaning of the text and hence, to inspire vulnerability for being touched and the joy of recitation. In Nelson's words (Ibid., 95), "Weeping is one of the manifestations of the ecstatic state."

Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali (1058-1111), a medieval Persian Islamic philosopher whose renewing philosophy and treatises *Kimiya-yi Sa'adat* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*)

profoundly impacted Persian Islamic culture and music, emphasizes the importance of

huzn in recitation and weeping, albeit in sincerity instead of feigned ecstasy. According to

Ghazali, "ecstasy is Truth. It is what grows up out of the abundance of the love of God Most

High and out of sincerity in desiring Him and longing to meet Him. That is stirred up by

hearing Qur'an also." (al-Ghazali 8/1168-9, in Nelson 2001, 95) In his description, the signs

of effect by hearing Quranic recitation are weeping, swooning, and even dying. As Nelson

mentions, the role of the reciters is not only the transmission of meaning from the text but

also to stir the hearts of the listeners with those meanings, and often, this is directly related

to the association of the *huzn* in the voice, the vulnerability of the heart and musical

artistry.

It is essential to note the long-standing praise for the concept of *huzn* in Persian thought,

poetics, and philosophy and its semiotic integration with a profound understanding of love

(*'eshq/'ishq*). Shahab ad-Din Sohravardi[27], the great Persian philosopher and founder of the

school of Illuminationism[28] (*Hekmat-e Ishraq*), in his philosophical narrative treatise *Fi*

Haqiqat al-'Ishq (*On the Reality of Love*), also known as *Munis ol-Oshaq* (*Companion of*

Lovers), focuses on the description of *'ishq* [29](love) as constantly being accompanied by the

shared origins, *husn* (beauty) and *huzn* (sorrow). Through a complex system of mystic

metaphors and narratives from the story of Yusuf (Joseph) and other Quranic stories,

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[27] Also Suhrawardi

[28] (Literally, Wisdom of the Rising Light) in philosophy and mysticism is a philosophical and mystical school of thought introduced by the Iranian philosopher and Master of Illumination, Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi, in the twelfth century. His fundamental treatise *Kitab Hikmat al-Ishraq* (lit: *Book of the Wisdom of Illumination*) was influenced by Avicennism, Peripateticism, Neoplatonism, and the ancient tradition of Persian wisdom. His philosophy is nevertheless distinct as a novel and holistic addition to the history of Islamic philosophy. Suhrawardi uses pre-Islamic Iranian gnosis, synthesizing it with Greek and Islamic wisdom. He thought of himself as a reviver or resuscitator of the ancient Persian wisdom ("Illuminationism" in Wikipedia).

[29] Also *'eshq*

Suhravardi describes beauty, love, and sorrow (*huzn*) as three brothers; the story begins

with the older brother, beauty, exploring in his journey toward humankind as he is

continuously followed by his younger brothers, love, and sorrow, wherever he goes. These

symbols are epitomized in the story's characters, including Yusuf, Zulaikha, and others.

It is noteworthy that Suhravardi establishes a "brotherhood" among other affectionate

relationships between the three to emphasize their shared origin and source of existence.

In her aesthetic and ethical review of the relationship between *husn, 'eshq*, and *huzn* in the

treatise, Parvin Shirbisheh (2016, 83) adds, "to achieve *husn*, love is needed. In order to

make love ready for this, *huzn* is needed. *Huzn* prepares human's soul ready for the

presence of love." (in Azadehfar 2017, 215-16, translated by the author) This philosophical

concept behind the comprehensible semiotics and the appreciated cultural history of

imaging a tripolar mystic view originates from both Islamic Sufism and Persian philosophy

and poetics mentioned as "religion of love" in Leonard Lewisohn's words (2010). It creates

a common sense of interrelation and co-existence of beauty, love, and sorrow as spirits of

the same body. This recurring rhetoric relationship establishes a delightful yet unique

context for the meaning of sorrow, specifically the term "*huzn*." This example in Persian

literature separates huzn from pain as negative or dark psychological reference. On the

contrary, as Azadehfar (2017) mentions, Iranian sages and thinkers have frequently

cherished *huzn* in a human's path of perfection and purification rather than finding it as

destructive pain.

Additionally, relying on the Pre-Islamic Persian philosophies (especially Zoroastrian

dualism) and by using "plotted" narratives beyond the conventional and traditional

approach of allegorical anecdotes, Suhravardi begins the story with the first step of creation of intellect by *Noor ol-Anvār* (Light of lights). Intellect is then endowed with three features of "beauty," "love," and "sorrow" as three brothers from the same origin. As part of his Illuminationist philosophy, Suhravardi emphasizes the originality of "light[30]," the fundamental binary opposition between "light" and "darkness," and their consequent parallels, such as "heaven" and "earth" or "knowledge" and "ignorance" are manifest in the binary opposition between "love" and "beauty" as separated in order to kindle the passion (sorrow) for a reunion which turns him into a traveler (*salik*) of the "spiritual journey" in the second half of the story. As Rezaei & Ghalkhanbaz (2020, 56) discuss, these two stages present first a descending and then an ascending arch in the deep structure of the story, "which causes the separation between the brothers, the most important sequence in this narrative [that] appears to be disjunctive." The masterful engineering of semiotics in a narrative mode by Suhravardi highlights his work in mystic literature. Moreover, the binary opposition of love and beauty through the idea of a reunion, motivated by the spiritual and ethical concentration of sorrow, intensifies the epitomized role of *huzn,* and love poetry in the Persian mind. This dichotomic meaning also dominates in many poems by Hafez, or Muwlana Jalal-e-din Balkhi (Rumi), as he often dismisses *huzn* (also referenced as *gham*: sorrow) as a feeling of despair. In his interpretation, embracing sorrow is a mechanism, or healing for the despair.

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[30] Suhrawardi taught a complex and profound emanationist cosmology, in which all creation is a successive outflow from the original Supreme Light of Lights (*Nur al-Anwar*). He makes extensive use of Zoroastrian symbolism, and his elaborate angelology is also based on Zoroastrian models ("Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi" in Wikipedia).

Gham (Sadness, Sorrow)

Regarding the expressive and perceptive aspects of Iranian music performance, *gham* (sadness, sorrow) and *gham-angiz* (sad, sorrowful) are among the most widely mentioned characteristics described by scholars, encounters, and listeners of Iranian music. However, in everyday Persian language, the words *gham*, *anduh* (sorrow), *huzn*, *soug* (grief), and even *narahati* (unease, emotional pain) are often used synonymously while within the more intellectual contexts of poetry, science, and philosophy, the meanings of these terms may vary. In his analysis of melodic structure in Iranian music, Azadehfar (2017, 213) relates the expression of *gham* to the melodic pleasure of Iranian music. He emphasizes that while in a general sense, *gham* may imply a regretful, painful, or anguished state of discomfort and even a disease or symptom of depression in psychology, in the intellectual context, *gham* is not a sign of depression as a disorder or illness for which medication measure should be taken.

There is also an important yet overlooked fact regarding various levels and qualities of sadness, both under the term "*gham*" or separate terms, especially in the poetic, philosophical, and theosophical doctrines and anthology and within the perception of an educated Persian speaker. In Persian poetry, for instance, the *gham* caused by the romantic love or yearning of humans for humans differs from the *gham* of a human's separation from the divine or the origin (although both might be reflected in each other through metaphors). Likewise, the quality of *gham* as a regretful feeling for lost youth is different from the sad homesickness or longing for homeland, even though both are nostalgic. In a more specific sense of Persian poetry, the metaphors for the melancholic sadness of falling

in love at a young age are distinct from those of falling in love as an older person (usually described by the poet as a narrator). The same variety exists for nostalgia, regret, yearning, suffering, commemorating, mourning, and grief. Accordingly, in the perception of ordinary Persian thought, the quality, intensity, and definition of sadness and sorrow are based on individuals' subjective and reflexive experiences following the context. More dominantly, in music, arts, poetry, and intellectual writings, the source of this experience is encapsulated within the semiotic system of metaphors, analogies, and intertextual meanings. For instance, this *ruba'i*[31](quatrain) by Mowlana Rumi plays with the concept of sorrow:

اندر دل بی وفا غم و ماتم باد

آن را که وفا نیست ز عالم کم باد

دیدی که مرا هیچ کسی یاد نکرد

جز غم که هزار آفرین بر غم باد

May grief [matam] and sadness [gham] come to the unfaithful heart,

And in this world may betrayal play a smaller part.

Sadness [gham] is the only friend who stays with me, still true,

And for that, loyal sadness [gham], a thousand thanks to you.

(Mowlana Rumi, *Divan of Shams.* translation Link[32])

In this example, while Mowlana Rumi refers to "*gham*" and "*matam*" "sadness and grief" as an uneasy feeling and a curse of punishment upon the unfaithful, he also uses a dichotomic reference of praise to the faithfulness and friendship of sadness (*gham*) toward himself for which he is deeply grateful. More specifically, *matam* refers to grieving sadness at losing

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[31] A form of Persian poetry or verse consisting of four lines.
[32] Translation Link: https://gardenofrumi.tumblr.com/post/10509161999/may-grief-and-sadness-come-to-the-unfaithful

someone or something, especially in Shi'a mourning rituals. In this context for Persian readers, Rumi associates an unfaithful heart with a loss or death worthy of grieving over, as in the rituals. Also, Rumi simultaneously emphasizes his own (elevated) code of loyalty to wisdom and morality through his attachment to the praised quality and solitude of abiding sorrow. Various *tones* of sorrow and sadness (*gham*) create a dialogical poetic texture and a flexible system of semantics that are dominant in Persian imagery and metaphors.

Persian music, in particular, carries a vast extent of rhetorical implications from this semiotic system in poetry and philosophy. Distinguishing the mood and the quality of affect regarding sorrow in various *dastgahs* (modes) of Persian classical repertoire by describing their characteristics as "*gham-e javan*" (youthful or flaming sadness or sorrow as of a young lover) for *dastgah* Dashti, in comparison to "*gham-e pir*" (old, glorious, or wise sorrow) in *dastgah* Homayoun or *"gham-e 'erfani"* (mystic, esoteric, or '*erfani* sorrow) in *dastgah* Nava by performers and advanced listeners are among these examples.

Among a wide range of recognizable words for sorrow in Iranian music and literature, "*gham*" is the most used and general term. While *huzn* is often appreciated as a poetic term used in more formal and philosophical music-related contexts, *gham* is the dominant term used in writing and conversation. It includes a wide range of qualitative meanings and adjectives to contextualize and express the affect in music and its prosodic poetry. Most Iranian musicians describe it as "*gham-e shirin*" (sweet sorrow) or "*gham-e ziba"* (beautiful sorrow) when referring to the ethos of sorrow and, more broadly, the emotional aspect of Iranian music which they even highlight as an aesthetic authenticity and genuine artistry. This conceptual reference sometimes confuses or contradicts the general use of the term as

a "suffering or unhappy situation" in the understanding of the non-expert public who find this characteristic as a negativity in the music of a nation and try to dismiss it as a backwardness or a result of longtime religious authority. As a result, some musicians have developed a denial view upon attributing the characteristics of *gham-angiz* (sorrowful) to Iranian music.

Suz (Burning)

One of the most applied and profound connotations of love in Persian poetry is *suz* (burning). The recurring metaphors such as *suz-e 'ishq* (burning love) and *atash-e 'ishq* (fire of love) are frequent terms both in daily and poetic contexts. This theme is the core of the Persian "religion of love" and is open to interpretation both as earthly and divine love. Among the most well-known Persian poets who normalized the theme of burning love in philosophical and poetic contexts are Attar and Mowlana Rumi. The following example by Attar is familiar to all Iranians:

<div dir="rtl">

جملگی در حکم سه پروانه ایم

در جهان عاشقان افسانه ایم

اولی خود را به شمع نزدیک کرد

گفت هان من یافتم معنای عشق

دومی نزدیک شعله بال زد

گفت هان من سوختم در سوز عشق

سومی خود داخل آتش فکند

آری آری این بود معنای عشق

</div>

We're all really three butterflies
In the world of love, we are a legend
The first came near the candle and said

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"I have found the meaning of love"

The second fluttered its wing near the flame and said,

"I've been burned by the fire of love"

The third threw himself into the fire

Yes, yes, this is the meaning of love.

(*The Three Butterflies* by Attar. translation link[33])

Here, *sham'* (candle) is the holder of the fire, also the source of light as a familiar metaphor

in Persian philosophy, whose love takes the butterfly (the lover or mystic seeker) to be

burnt and consumed. Attar images a metaphoric world of love in which lovers and seekers

of meaning and wisdom in life are valued based on their sincerity and devotion to self-burn

in the flame of the beloved. The mystic dialogue of the candle and the butterfly is a subtle

innate one communicated through invitation to burning light and yearning for the joyful

suffering of burning for the light. According to Pourjavadi (2013), the theme of the butterfly

and candle had been used by other poets and philosophers (including Ghazali) before Attar,

however, he perfectionated the interpretation of love in its metaphoric elements and made

it a powerful and recurring analogy in Persian language. He brings the story both in his

divan and *Mantiq al-Tayr.*

Interestingly, the candle is also a metaphor for the lover who burns and stands in suffering

to keep the light of love alive. Hafez masterfully uses this metaphor in a lyrical ghazal,

admiring the lover for being a candle, hence burning continuously and faithfully. In the

original Persian verse, Hafez intensifies this point and adds musical beauty by repeating

"*cho sham'*"(like a candle, candle-like) at the end of each verse. He uses all the visual and

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[33] "The Three Butterflies" by Attar, Link: https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2012/11/07/attar-the-three-butterflies/

personified elements such as day-and-night sleeplessness, shedding tears, being worn out and pale, shredding, flame, sorrow, separation, and even the famous butterfly to poeticize the meaning of burning in the character of a candle, the faithful lover. Referring to the dualism in ancient Zoroastrian Iran, the contrasting forces epitomized in natural and human elements such as water and fire, flood and flame, head and heart, bloody and colorless, darkness and light, day and night, are the witnesses of forbearing love by which the lover is attested. In order to show the vastness and intensity of the affect, imagery, personification, and philosophical view on love and burning in this inclusive ghazal, I bring the whole piece. As of other poem examples in this chapter, this famous ghazal has been put into music and voice in various works.

در وفایِ عشقِ تو مشهورِ خوبانم چو شمع / شب‌نشینِ کویِ سربازان و رِندانم چو شمع

روز و شب خوابم نمی‌آید به چشمِ غم‌پرست / بس که در بیماریِ هجرِ تو گریانم چو شمع

رشتهٔ صبرم به مِقراضِ غَمَت بُبْریده شد / همچنان در آتشِ مِهرِ تو سوزانم چو شمع

گر کُمیتِ اشکِ گلگونم نبودیِ گرم‌رو / کِی شدی روشن به گیتی رازِ پنهانم چو شمع؟

در میانِ آب و آتش همچنان سرگرمِ توست / این دلِ زارِ نزارِ اشک‌بارانم چو شمع

در شبِ هجران، مرا پروانهٔ وصلی فرست / ور نه از دَردَت جهانی را بسوزانم چو شمع

بی جمالِ عالم‌آرایِ تو روزم چون شب است / با کمالِ عشقِ تو در عینِ نُقصانم چو شمع

کوهِ صبرم نرم شد چون موم در دستِ غمت / تا در آب و آتشِ عشقت گدازانم چو شمع

همچو صبحم یک نفس باقیست با دیدارِ تو / چهره بنما دلبرا تا جان برافشانم چو شمع

سرفَرازم کن شبی از وصلِ خود ای نازنین / تا مُنَوَّر گردد از دیدارت ایوانم چو شمع

آتشِ مِهر تو را حافظ عجب در سر گرفت / آتشِ دل، کِی به آبِ دیده بِنْشانم چو شمع

Faithful in your love, my fame has spread, candle-like

At the home of the homeless, I make my bed, candle-like.

Day and night, from sorrows, sleep escapes from my eyes

Sick of being apart, my eyes are teary, red, candle-like.

Scissors of sorrows have cut my patience' string

Flame of your love burns upon my weary head, candle-like.

If my bloody tears fail to bring color to my cheeks

How else can my secret tales ever be said, candle-like?

Amidst water & fire, my head is busy with your thoughts

While my heart flooded with tears it needs to shed, candle-like.

In the night of separation, send butterfly of union

Else from your pain the world I'll burn & shred, candle-like.

Without your beautiful vision, my day is night

With the love I have bred, my flaws I dread, candle-like.

My patience is eroding, like a mountain from sorrows' rains

In the ocean of your love, path of fire I tread, candle-like.

Like dawn, I blow one breath to see your face

Show yourself O Beloved, else I'll be dead, candle-like.

Honor me one night with your union, my friend

Let your light, light up my house & spread, candle-like.

Fire of your love caught on Hafiz's head

When will my heart's fire, my tears wed, candle-like?

Examining more on the philosophical view, one of the most famous Persian poets with a special focus on the theme of "burning and melting in the fire of love" is Mowlana Rumi, influenced by Attar's mysticism and poetic style. His most philosophical poem based on musical interpretation is the opening piece, *ney-nameh*, of his six books of *Masnavi*[35]. The piece is known as *The Tale of the Reed*[36]. An excerpt shows the theme of burning in the suffering of separation from the source and the beloved as the following:

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می‌کند

از جدایی‌ها حکایت می‌کند

کز نیستان تا مرا ببریده اند

از نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده اند

آتش است این بانگ نای و نیست باد

هر که این آتش ندارد نیست باد

Listen to this reed and how it wails
Of going away and other sad tales.

Since they cut it from the other reeds,
Its moaning in men and women forever breeds

The song of this pipe is not of wind but fire:
Let any whose heart is not ablaze expire.

(Rumi, Masnavi, translated by Blodgett and Mannani 2018)

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[34] "Like a Candle" by Hafez, link: https://www.sattor.com/
[35] Also *mathnavi*, is a form of poem written in rhyming couplets, or more specifically "a poem based on independent, internally rhyming lines" (*mathnavi* in Wikipedia).
[36] Also *The Song of the Reed*

In her article, Firoozeh Papan-Matin introduces the piece:

> *The Tale of the Reed* […] is the account of the separation of the lover, personified as the reed, from the Fatherland, the reed-bed, where it had belonged in the presence of God, the beloved. It has been argued that this prelude to the *Masnavi* captures the major themes that appear in the ensuing several thousand rhyming couplets. Considering the significance of *Nay Namih*, the central role of the reed in this poem becomes an important subject of inquiry. In other words, what the reed stands for in Rumi's life as well as in the life of the poem is an essential question in understanding both the *Nay Namih* and the *Masnavi.*

(Papan-Matin 2003, 246)

William Chittick also interprets the suffering of love in this tale as "the reed or flute is the soul, torn from its reed bed, moaning and yearning in pain. All it complaints boil down to one complaint: I don't have what I want." (Chittick, 340) In short, "the human's soul dwells in separation (*firaq*) as a result of the creative command, so it longs for union (*wiṣal*)." (Ibid) As mentioned, through the personification of a wind instrument, ney, its metaphoric reference to the human's soul whose breeze gives sound to the instrument, and the familiar story of love and separation, Rumi uses the metaphor of *suz* and fire in a poetic and ethical interpretation of Sufism.

The importance of Rumi's *ney-nameh* in Persian classical music stands not only in its symbolic them of "*suz-e firaq*" (burning pain of separation) as a poetic context but also in its structural and performative aspects. All dastgahs of Persian *radif* repertoire include an elaborate vocal *gusheh* called *Masnavi* based on the metric structure, content, and verses of the masnavi poems (mostly works of Rumi), which represent an overview of a *dastgah* and its modulations. It has been frequently used in *radif* music both in educational methods and public performances, inspiring many other poems and music pieces based on the same story. This form originates from the old tradition of *masnavi-khani* (*masnavi*-reciting) through which *masnavi* poems (mostly by Rumi) were recited in a musical format. They

were performed not only in Sufi gatherings and *munajat* (religious chants), but also in *zurkhaneh*[37] (lit. house of strength) rituals and folk regions. Music historian Babak Khazraei (2018, 18-19) suggests that *The Masnavi* poems were meant to be vocalized rather than only recited. Thus, poets, especially Rumi, through his familiarity with music, considered the musical elements, vocality, and sentiment as fundamental aspects of elegance in their composition. *The Masnavi* was close to Iranians' hearts, and any singer who performed it tried to have their own version. As it will be analyzed in *gusheh Masnavi-e Isfahan* in Chapter 4, a whole *dastgah* can be summarized in one long *gusheh* of *Masnavi* based on excerpts from masnavi poems such as the *Tale of the Reed* and represent all the encapsulated philosophy and metaphors by Rumi through the musicality of the words, voice, and musical instrument.

Tarab (Ecstasy): A New Dichotomy

Literally meaning "ecstasy," this word has controversial references in modern Iran regardless of its Arab origin and long-lasting appearance in Persian classic poetry. In its briefest description in Arab cultures, as Racy (2003, 229) defines, *tarab* is the ecstatic feeling that urban traditional music produces. "In Arab cultures, the merger between music and emotional transformation is epitomized by the Arabic concept of *tarab*, which may have not an exact equivalent in Western languages." (Ibid. 5) Racy defines *tarab* in two categories: First, as a reference to the indigenous, essentially secular music of the Near-Eastern Arab cities, denoting the theoretically based, modally structured, and

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[37] The traditional gymnasium and Iranian martial arts. Originally used to train warriors in Persia, *zurkhaneh* system of training combines martial arts, calisthenics, strength training and music. It contains elements of pre-Islamic and post-Islamic culture of Iran (particularly Zoroastrianism, Mithraism and Gnosticism) with the spirituality of Persian Shia Islam and Sufism (zurkhaneh in Wikipedia)

professionally oriented tradition of music making. This domain is often called "art music" by Western scholars. Second, as a way to describe the musical affect *per se*, or more specifically, the extraordinary emotional state evoked by music. In this meaning, this word has been frequently used in medieval and modern writings on music and musicians. (Ibid, 5-6). The second meaning, also the most relevant to the Persian treatises and poetry, relates to the world "*mutrib*" (Persian: *motreb*) as a standard designation for the "*tarab* singer, or the provider of *tarab* ecstasy." Racy also suggests "ecstasy" as an equivalent for *tarab.* This meaning "implies experiences of emotional excitement, pain or other similarly intense emotions, exaltation, a sense if yearning or absorption, feeling of timelessness, elation or rapturous delight". Other related references that Racy mentions include "enchantment" (Danielson 1997, 11-12), "aesthetic emotion" (Lagrange 1996, 17 in Racy 2003), and "the feeling roused by music" (Shiloah 1995, 16) while he highly ranks "ecstasy" for its flexibility, emotional nuances, and various conditions of transformative state as of *tarab.* (Racy 2003, 6)

It is important to note the change of meaning and the social and moral position of the word "*tarab*" and "*motreb*" in Iran, especially after the authorization of Islamic Shi'ism and later in the course of modernization and the establishment of the art music theory and aesthetics in the 20th century. A more elaborate description of these changes is explained in Chapter 3. As it will be shared, these words' artistic value and social level declined with their conceptualization as the light music of entertainment, for happy but non-artistic events, and by the uneducated and lower rank of musicians. As a result, there is a controversial imbalance between the older poetic, mystic, and literary references to the word "*tarab*" as an "ecstatic and aesthetic experience of affect" and the modern re-emergence of it in a

"derogatory context of entertaining service and the bottom of artistic classification."

However, examples of Persian classical poetry show the mystic context of *motreb* and *tarab* as a mediator of wisdom, Sufism, sense, and sensibility. Here is a verse of ghazal by Hafez (1325-1390):

<div dir="rtl">
چه ره بود این که زد در پرده مطرب

که می رقصند با هم مست و هشیار
</div>

In musical note, what path is this that the minstrel struck,

That, together, the insensible and the sensible dance

(Ghazal by Hafez, translation link[38])

In the following ghazal, Sa'di (1210-1291) brings irony and dynamic imagination by contrasting pain and sadness, a *motreb* whose wailing is pleasant as of a lovebird whose (tragic) song of love is full of *tarab* (enchantment).

<div dir="rtl">
مطرب ما را دردیست که خوش می نالد

مرغ عاشق طرب انگیز بود آوازش
</div>

The enchanting wail by our motreb comes from the pain he owns

Replete with tarab as of the song by a lovebird

(Ghazal by Sa'di, translated by the author)

However, it is not known precisely when this symbolic and mystic position of *tarab* and *motreb* changed. It seems that by the late 19th and early 20th centuries of Iran under Qajar ruling, religious authorities had labeled it as taboo for the purpose of delegitimating festive music and its tie to prohibited morals in Islam based on their interpretation (e.g., dance, alcohol consumption, body exposure). Additionally, the educated musicians marginalized it

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[38] Ghazaliyat Hafez ranslation link: https://www.sattor.com/english/ghazaliatofhafiz.htm

to distinguish their art music and culture from the lower culture. Thus, *motrebi* performance became a disgrace to musical artistry which was already pressed by religion.

Conversely, in the context of Syrian music and authenticity among Aleppines, as Jonathan Shannon (2006, 155) clarifies, *mutrib* is "a true artist who can evoke *tarab*" and should be distinguished from a mere singer-performer called *mughanni.* Furthermore, Racy mentions *tarab* in terms of the perceptual transformation and physical empowerment as reminiscent of *hal* in Iranian classical music, which stands for the mystical state, the spiritual mood of the audience and performer, and describes their "extraordinary feeling of spiritual and physical empowerment." (Racy 2003, 201) By comparison and based on the notions by the Iranian kamancheh player Morteza Varzi and other observations, Racy differentiates the Iranian *hal* as characteristically contemplative, introspective, and mystical, while the Arab counterpart is elative, extroverted, and more worldly-oriented. Iranian *hal* is closer to "ecstasy," although both these states are elusive. (Ibid. 201-2)

CHAPTER THREE

Legacy of Maktab

What is Maktab?

The pedagogical tradition of Iranian classical music stands far from a dominant system of formalized institutions. Instead, it is based on the stylized teaching methods of the individual teacher for the aesthetic approaches and philosophies: this is what is known as a *maktab*. The students develop their technical skills, sense of aesthetics, and emotional expression in music by following the *ostad* and his *maktab*'s teaching. The *maktab* system also creates a sense of belonging and cultural identity for the educator and followers.

After years of training and being closely mentored by an *ostad,* the musician becomes a mentor for the next generation based on the repertoire and philosophical teachings of the previous *ostad* whom he follows. A teacher's pedagogy also includes the performing styles and aesthetic approaches that make a *maktab* recognizable. This factor adds to the authority and influence of the teacher and forms a musical and pedagogical lineage based on the individualization and identity of the teacher—although it may further develop or decay through time. Accordingly, most *maktab*s are named after their leading master creators, whose artistry and methods are transmitted to the students and followers. The title indicates not only the method and content of teaching but also the master's

professional and personal beliefs regarding musical aesthetics and the artist's position in society.

This individualized and stylized context of education dominated by a teacher makes the concept of *maktab* distinct from Iranian academic institutions such as *honarestan*[39] (music conservatories), which have a unified framework and formal structure. These institutions offer comprehensive music programs and multifaceted training and evaluation of knowledge and practice. However, in performance and aesthetics, it is the continuous tradition of *maktab* through which the most distinguished *ostads* have nurtured their skills and attitudes of musical expression. Professional musicians' common advice to students in Iran hardly gives credit to the academy as a sufficient path to becoming a competent and *asil* performer. Students may often hear from their *ostads* emphasizing, "you won't become a real performer only through an academy." It seems that most distinguished performers and teachers have established themselves either through the *maktab* tradition or, at least, through the connected streams of *maktab* within the institutions. For instance, my teacher, *Ostad* Sabet, who also has academic degrees in music performance, achieved his competency in *santur* performance through *Ostad* Payvar's *maktab* both in the private classes and its extension to the academies such as *honarestan* and the University of Art. Thus, in performance, a *maktab's* training role can dominate the formal education system. The long-term instability of the social status of music in Iran and the rulers' negligence to institutional musical education and programs burdened the private classes and educators with the responsibility of preserving the art of music under their private *maktabs* and

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[39] Also *hunarestan*

educating the next generations of musicians. Therefore, *maktabs* became cultural identities as well as professional sources of education for serious music learners. One of my interlocutors explains his analysis of the elements of methodology and musical identity in *Maktab* Payvar as follows:

> *Maktab* Payvar is a multifaceted university by itself. You need proper qualifications to be admitted, inexhaustible perseverance to continue, and considerable talent and effort to graduate. But it is also a musical family home where your human values, professional attitudes, and manners as a musician grow. *Maktab* Payvar is the most established and comprehensive *maktab* in Iranian music. I realized these characteristics more clearly after analyzing and comparing teaching methods in my career as a teacher.
>
> (personal interview, 2023)

Many of the followers, students, and teachers of *Maktab* Payvar in various parts of Iran with whom I have talked over the past fifteen years also shared these notions. They highlighted that *Maktab* Payvar is not only a person but a worldview: it is an approach and a vision harvested from the extracts and essence of plural methodological views in the past, which bore fruit in contemporary times through his novel efforts and ambitions.

Faramarz Payvar (1933-2009) and a Flourished Maktab Legacy

Faramarz Payvar (1933-2009) was born in an educated and artistic family in Tehran. His father was a professor of French language, artist, and music enthusiast; his grandfather was an adept painter in the Qajar court. Since childhood, he was welcomed to sit in the musical gatherings at home, where his father invited friends and musical talents of the time. Payvar's serious musical life, however, began at the age of seventeen by joining *Maktab* Saba and continued through his productive training and loyal bond with *Ostad* for nearly a decade until Saba's death. As Payvar describes,

> The special privilege of *Ostad* Saba's class was that he taught music by notation. This [method] was unique at the time, and he was competent in *santur*'s repertoire and technique heritage. Before that, I had worked with a *santur* teacher orally for a while but didn't gain much from it.
>
> (interview in "*The Great Masters of Iranian Music*" 19??, private archive)

Saba's complete dedication to his meticulous pedagogy and constant support for new high talents enriched the classroom's outcome for Payvar's *zowq* and brilliant *santur* skills. Soon, Payvar started his innovations by composing a duet, "Goftogou*" ("Dialogue"), for *santur* and violin, which showcased his innovations toward the potential of *santur* performance and Iranian musical texture. Saba, then an established master and virtuoso on the national radio programs, introduced Payvar as a rising musician and supported him by playing the violin part of "Goftogou" alongside Payvar's *santur*. The master-disciple collaboration continued(*Figure 3*), and Payvar and several other students helped Saba publish his *radif* (1949) for *santur*[40] education. The *radif* evolved from Saba's compositions, improvisations, and handwritten lessons for his students in the classroom. This book was the first *radif* published specifically for *santur* based on its techniques and aesthetics. Payvar then realized a step was missing before *santur* beginners would develop sufficient skills for Saba's *radif*. With Saba's approval, he authored a well-structured beginner's method, *Dastur-e Santur* (*Method for Santur*), published in 1961 to develop a more progressive and approachable training path for *santur* students. In 2023, this book is still known as the most fundamental introductory method for *santur* students.

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[40] Saba is the only Iranian musician who established multiple separate radifs for various instruments (e.g., *santur, violin, setar*), specifically composed and arranged for each instrument's techniques and artistry. Although some of his works remained unpublished during his lifetime, many of them were collected, revised and published by efforts of his students, including Payvar.
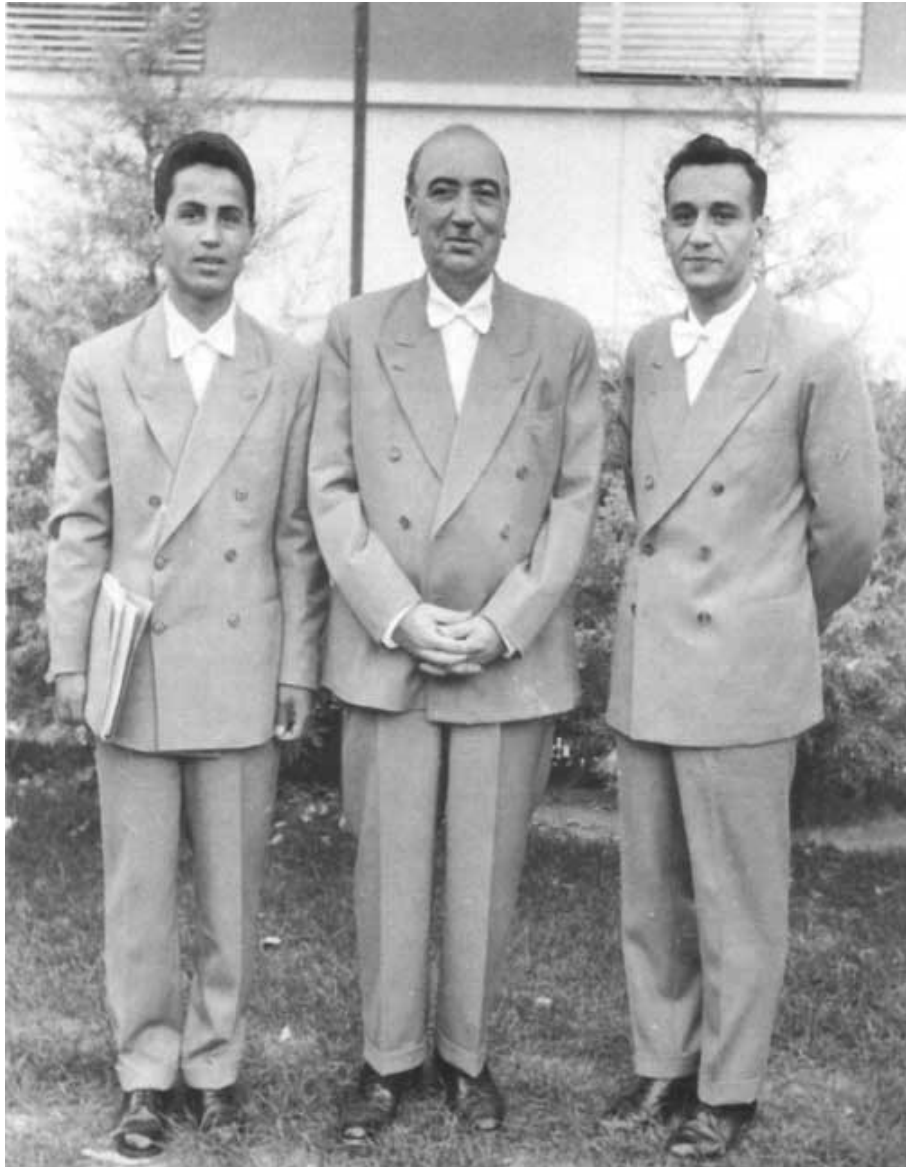
Figure 3. Left to right: Manoochehr Sadeqi (Saba's student), Ostad Saba, young Faramarz Payvar
Photo from Saba in Wikipedia[41].

After Saba's passing in 1957, Payvar continued studying various versions of instrumental

and vocal *radifs* with acclaimed *ostads,* including Mousa Maroufi (*tar*) and Abdollah Davami

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[41] Abolhasan Saba. (2023, June 6). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolhasan_Saba

(*avaz*). These teachers had their individualized *radifs* and various oral and written teaching methods. Through the years, Payvar created his own style of techniques and aesthetics in *santur,* which remains the most popular and established style of *santur* performance. In addition to teaching, he continued his diligent commitment to performing, composing, and publishing educational methods for *santur*. These efforts, which were expanded through five decades, eventually made his *santur* repertoire and pedagogy the most comprehensive and consistent individual *maktab* in the history of Iranian musical instruments. The significance of *Maktab* Payvar lies in the vast progressive repertoire he created and the pedagogy, aesthetics, and ethical views by which many followers identify themselves today. His music has a developed literature and aesthetic destination, achievable through his clear pedagogical framework. One of my interlocutors, who is a *tar* student of *Ostad* Zarif's *maktab*, quotes his *ostad's* frequent emphasis regarding the influence of Payvar's *maktab* in the development of the *tar maktab*, both through his compositions and pedagogical style (personal interview 2023).

Despite all the credit given to *Maktab* Payvar, especially by the supporters of the notated system, not all *maktabs* in Iran aim for a highly structuralized pedagogy. While Payvar continued Saba's moderation between the old tradition and Vaziri's modernist view, another group of musicians took a more conservative approach after Saba. This group was known as *sunnat-gara* (traditionalists), and as will be discussed in Chapter 6, they dismissed the benefit of Western notation and other methods in the educational tradition. They categorized these changes as distant from *isalat* (authenticity) and focused instead on preserving the pre-modern era's oral training. The consequent divisions and directions of the traditionalist methods are still followed in Iran today. Sunnat-gara *maktabs* eventually

began using the notated and recorded material at points in their *maktab* pedagogies. Yet they have a wide range of opposing views upon *Saba-Payvar Maktabs* and their subsequent methodologies, which they express under titles such as "*qarb-zadeh*" (Westernized) and "*shirin-navaz*" (sweet-performer) for rereferring to the music "far from aesthetic" to "non-authentic" at all. (Kiani 1989 in Jafarzadeh 1991, 150) These conflicting ideologies in defining *maktab* and valid pedagogy regarding the individualized performing styles add complexity to the aesthetic education and interpretation of *hal*.

In a broader historical view, Payvar is the refined completion of *Maktab* Saba, a novel but moderate view that sought to bring modernity and tradition into balance during the new modernist Pahlavi era (1925). Unlike Vaziri, Saba was more concerned with bringing modernity under the wings of Iranian music rather than the opposite. His approach is also the moderating bridge between the modernist Vaziri with systemizing goals and the traditionalist Noor-Ali Boroumand and Safvat whose conservative approach dismissed any sign of Westernization and distance from the past.

The Debate of Maktab and Style

Maktab, in its current context, is a modern concept that—like several old traditions in Iran—became reintroduced within the new local "intellectual and artistic contexts" shaped in early modern Iran since the 18th century (Sedaqatkish 2019). Although the pedagogical master-disciple traditions are not new in Iran's musical and artistic scenery, the inclusive discourse of musical *maktab* with its models of agency, ideology, practice, and dissemination as a system or process, is relatively modern. The dictionary of *Dehkhoda Lexicon* defines the word "*maktab*" as the following,

A collection of thoughts and reflections of a master [*ostād*] that have dominated among a group. Or a specific philosophical and/or literary (or other) opinion. Also, a group of artists of a nation or city with a particular shared interest in the practice and expression of art, such as the French School, School of Paris, or the Impressionist School.

(*maktab* in *Dehkhoda* 1994, translated by the author)

The word "*maktab*"—as a school of art and intellect—is sometimes interpreted as "*sabk*" (style) in the visual and fine arts of Iran. Comparable with the eras or geographical categories in Western art or music, *maktab* may cover the specific thoughts and purposes of the artists of a particular historical period or geographical region, such as *Maktab Safavid* during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) or *Maktab Tabriz* (north-west of Iran) in visual arts. However, in music, there is some confusion about the ambiguous association of the word *maktab*, which is associated with both *sabk* and *shiveh* (manner or technical method). As music scholar-critic Sedaqatkish (2019) argues, these concepts have been used unclearly or misleadingly. For instance, Mohammadreza Lotfi, a distinguished *tar* player, educator, and author mostly known as a traditionalist, excludes the concept of *sabk* in his definition of *maktab* and its components. He reduces the individual style of the performer, which covers both technical and interpretive (and sometimes the creation process through improvisation) specialties in Iranian music merely to the word *shiveh* (manner). He defines *shiveh* as "the individual character of an artist" and "performer's signature." (Lotfi 1999, 221-3 in Sedaqatkish 2019, 75)

In a more recent article, Dariush Pirniakan, also a *tar* player and teacher with traditionalist views, defines *maktab* of *tar* in more detail. He clarifies that *maktab* is entirely different from performing a specific *sabk* and *shiveh*, so one *maktab* may have different styles and technical manners. *Maktab Saba,* especially in violin, is an excellent example of this

diversity since many of his talented students later created their own style and manner of violin performance. Also, Pirniakan lists the main differences between *maktab* with the other concepts:

> 1)*Maktab* has a specific repertoire; 2) *Maktab* has a specific learning syllabus; 3) *Maktab* trains the students and is capable of transmitting the content of the oral tradition to students; 4) The *maktab* repertoire is transmitted orally from generation to generation; 5) The musical repertoire of *maktab* consists of many characteristics such as techniques, *mezrab*-works (plucking techniques in *tar*), melodic interpretation, timing, rhythm, fingering, and particular musical meters; 6) *Maktab* followers believe in authentic performance of the inherited music from the past, without condensing or changing the main structure and framework.
>
> (Pirniakan 2008, 121 in Sedaqatkish 2019, 75-6., translated by the author)

Although this definition clarifies many significant aspects of *maktab*, it is limited to the oral tradition and excludes the embodiment of thoughts and ethics. In contrast, a modernist *tar* player and educator, Keyvan Saket emphasizes Ali-Naqi Vaziri as the first founder of *maktab* for being the first musician who composed descriptive and expressive music centered around an idea (theme, thought, or subject) while the previous expressive ways of old Iranian music (including works of the oral and improvisatory tradition) fall under the title of style or method. Also, in a short article on the repertoire and pedagogical structure of *Maktab Payvar*, Pejman Azarmina, a *santur* performer-composer who graduated from *Maktab Payvar*, clarifies *maktab* from *sabk* in simple but inclusive terms:

> *Maktab* focuses on methodologies of teaching and dissemination, while *sabk* is associated with styles of performing and composing. Faramarz Payvar's music has both, but each can be analyzed separately […] We should also note that Payvar's *maktab* extends beyond his private classroom.
>
> (Azarmina 2000, 170, translated by the author)

As a further complication, local paradigms (e.g., ethnicity, language, geopolitics) and their differentiation of style and educational methods may be an additional factor in establishing *maktab* aesthetics. For instance, in Persian arts, including a city's name in the title of a *maktab,* such as *Maktab Isfahan* (belonging to the city of Isfahan), adds further meaning to the quality of its criteria. Through the changing succession of power, the rising and falling of the ruling dynasties, and the relocation of the capital cities in the history of Iran, the sponsorship and art centers were also mobilized. These aspects significantly affected the defined styles, dissemination, amalgamation, aesthetics, and leading role of a specific *maktab* that belonged to a continuously reigned capital. Based on the geographical, cultural, and socio-political contexts and relations, a city's artistic *maktabs* flourished, circulated, or declined.

Also, it is noteworthy that unlike Persian literature, handicrafts, and visual arts, which benefited from patronage and dissemination for power or economic growth, music was often deprived of accessible and visible public presence and state support during the Islamic era. Except for rituals (e.g., Islamic Muharram and Persian Nowruz celebrations), art music was basically a private royal entertainment service or latent artistry kept behind the doors by the elite. Many music practitioners of the Qajar era and a number of them during the Pahlavi (e. g., the great vocalist, Shajarian) had different jobs than music, and they often kept their musicianship undercover in their closed circle due to the religious and social norms or maintaining the reputation of their state positions. This lack of visibility caused a lack of conceptualization in music. Thus, the pedagogy of aesthetics and styles remained partially blurred. With the emergence of modernist reformations during the Qajar period, independent art music events such as garden parties and the concerts of the

famed *Ukhuvvat* Ensemble came into the public scene (Khaleqi 2002, 76-80). Accordingly, musicianship and teaching become a profession rather than a service to the patrons or private gatherings.

As mentioned above, the common ambiguity of the three relative terms *(maktab, sabk, shiveh)* over the past century has been frequently a subject of musicians' debate for their validation of the content, resources of the tradition, and methods of dissemination and transmission in various *maktabs.* Belonging to the traditionalist views—*mousiqi-ye sunnati* (traditional music)—Pirniakan and Lotfi validate only the oral tradition and fixed frames, while many of the followers of Vaziri's musical system—known as *mousiqi-ye melli* (national music), also known as *tajaddod-gara* (modernist) highlight the addition of intellectuality, innovation, and methods of transmission. However, it is notable that these two views did not emerge in opposition, though their followers still divided their values and *maktab* system. Likewise, the concept of *isalat* (authenticity) and its defining roots in Iranian *maktabs* are subject to change and contain diversity as their ideologies developed.

Through his comparative analysis of various definitions, Sedaqatkish concludes that the concept of *sabk* or style is regarded more highly than *shiveh* or manner, and *maktab* is above them all. Yet one of the conflicting issues is the lack of distinction and defined boundaries between these three concepts and professional terminology in the Iranian context, making the study of the methods, aesthetics, and performing frames more challenging. Moreover, the process of *maktab* formation in Iranian history is not always the result of a gradual and continuous evolvement or linear hierarchies. Accordingly, the most comprehensive and clear definition of *maktab* is offered as the following,

> *Maktab* is a collection of ideas, aesthetics, and technical principles rationalized and described, becoming teachable, continuous, and established over a historical period, geographical place, or both. It is based on methodology and deliberate reproducibility.

(Sedaqatkish 2019, 83, Translated by the author)

Based on this definition, only a handful of *maktabs* are recognizable in Persian art music. In the general sense, the role of "*ta'lim*" or "transmission process" in forming a Persian *maktab* has dominated other aspects such as theoretical movements, aesthetic frames of style, representation, and philosophy of thoughts and manners. This fact distinguishes the concept from the Western meaning of "artistic school."

Simultaneously, the individually formed *maktabs* inspired by the intellectual concepts and training of Western schools (i.e., *Maktab Vaziri* and his descendants such as Saba and Payvar) offered a more definable and comprehensive foundation including a collection of rationalized and formulated ideas and methods. Sedaqatkish considers some of these intellectual ideas of modernity and change based on the old heritage, an urge to join the international dialogue, and the universal domain. (Sedaqatkish 2019, 83. translated by the author). In *Maktab Vaziri,* all three aspects of discourse, practice, and repertoire for aesthetics are included in music education for the first time in history. However, these aspects were defined differently and with various intensities in the *maktabs* after him. I will discuss the foundation and distinction of Maktab Vaziri, its offspring, and confronting *maktabs* in Chapter 6.

Musical Maktab: Affect and Aesthetics

Most of the existing knowledge on the *maktab* pedagogy of Iranian classical music refers to the publication of *radif* repertoire in the 19th century (Lucas 2019; Farhat 2004; During 1991; Nettl 1987) as a result of organizing and transcribing a collection of pieces. The establishment of *radif* –a modal system of twelve *dastgahs* and their subdivisions— attributed to the Farahani family, Ali-Akbar Farahani (182?-1862), and his sons, Mirza Hosein-Qoli and Mirza Abdollah, who taught the *radif* content of their father after his untimely death (Khaleqi vol. I. 2002, 101). *Ostad* Ali-Akbar was a distinguished *tar* and *setar* player and the leading musician in the court of Qajar. His nephew, Qolam-Hosein, and his sons taught the next generation of great *maktab* musicians such as Darvishkhan (*tar*), Vaziri (*tar*), Saba (*setar*), and Ebadi (se*tar*) on *tar* or se*tar*. Accordingly, the oldest version of *radif* and contemporary *maktab* system we can historically refer to is the Farahani brothers' *radif*s, and they were disseminated orally. An elaborate *maktab* lineage of Iranian classical music descending from the Farahani family tree is depicted in *Figure 4.*

The *maktab* classroom was a private setting at the teacher's or student's house. Each piece was performed by the *ostad* in short sections and had to be memorized precisely by the student after multiple repetitions and meticulous imitations in an individual or group format. The students who completed their studies successfully with the *ostad* were later responsible for disseminating it precisely to their students. Among the next generation of Mirza Abdollah's students, Ali-Naqi Vaziri was accountable for the first *radif* transcription— his master's *radif*, preserved as a reference source. Before this time,

according to music historian Khaleqi, only the military musicians and officials under Western teachers had notation literacy (Khaleqi Ibid, 102-105).
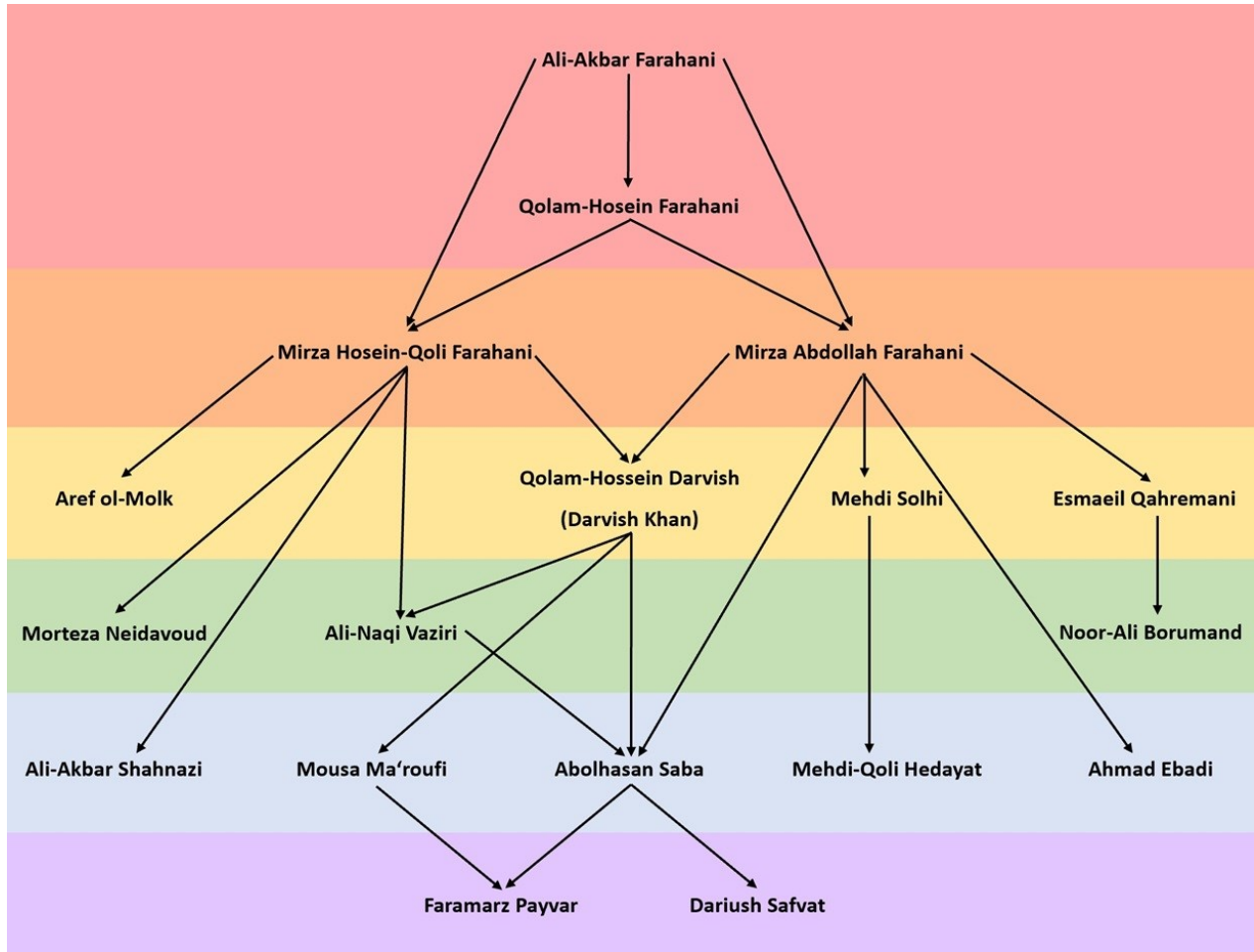
Figure 4. The lineage of maktab in Farahani's family tree, beginning from the early 1820s

Through the *ostadi-shagerdi* (master-disciple) connection, the *ostad* was followed by the students in terms of his knowledge of artistry, improvisational and musical skills, and sometimes in his ideological and social beliefs, moral codes of behavior, and lifestyle. A handful of students could achieve the status of the *ostad's* successor and continue the tradition as the *ostad's* representative. Each *ostad* was customarily dedicated to founding a *maktab* of his own teachings or continuing his former or leading master's *maktab.*

Accordingly, pedagogy was an *ostad's* individualized tradition rather than a unified or formal methodology.

Figure 5 is a photo of *Ostad* Payvar in his home classroom with tastefully framed pictures of his master, *Ostad* Saba, and his master's master *Ostad* Darvishkhan, showing his respect for his *maktab* lineage. This view was similar to *Ostad* Aliheidari's classroom, where I noticed the photos of *Ostad* Sabet and *Ostad* Saba during my first session, and his respect for his masters caught my attention. *Ostad* Payvar gifted me this photo personally when I asked for a photoshoot during my first visit with him in 2001. Since he was uncomfortable taking a public photo during his illness, he sent me one soon after our visit. *Figure 6* demonstrates the back of the picture, which he signed for me with his left hand since he could not write with his right (writing) hand after a stroke that paralyzed the right side of his body. His signature reads, "*For Nasim, Payvar*."

*Figure 5. Ostad Payvar in his private classroom with framed photos of his lineage musical ancestors.
Photo by Nasim Ahmadian*
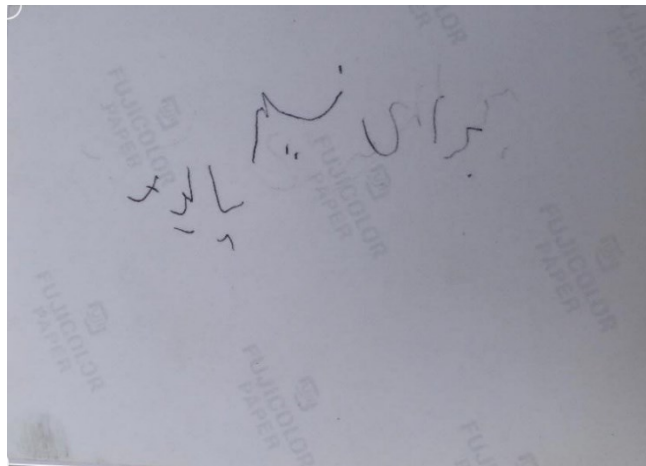
*Figure 6. The back of the previous photo, which Ostad Payvar signed for me, is "For Nasim, Payvar," by
taking the trouble to write with his non-writing hand. Photo by Nasim Ahmadian*

The practice of *ostadi-shagerdi* is the core of *maktab* continuity and learning. In *maktab*, the *ostad* leads the way for students seeking knowledge and virtues. The student will later lead the way for the next generation they educate. Similarly, in the practical and theoretical schools of Sufism, to enter the spiritual path, the adept—called *murid* (seeker)—seeks a guide to lead him through the different stations toward the goal through close supervision. This master is often called *Sheikh* (in Arabic) and *Pir* (in Persian) (Schimmel 1975, 101-2). As of *murid,* in Sufi traditions and schools of philosophy, the process of learning music is also based on a close master-disciple relationship and a long process of close artistic and emotional exchange between the individuals. It takes many years and levels of diligent presence, imitation, musical efforts, and ethical cultivation.

The music classroom experience based on the imitation of *ostad*'s artistry, both in the older oral transmission and the more recent and pervasive methods of notated adaptation, associates the student with the *ostad's* performance of *hal* and expression of affect. As my early discovery of *hal* in *Ostad* Aliheidari's classroom, this ethos of expression is soon realized by the student who observes and follows the *ostad* in a circle of aesthetic and emotional interpretation. The content of the *radif* repertoire (in both vocal and instrumental formats) has numerous references to the poetics and philosophy of *huzn, suz*, and suffering for love, which along with the *ostad's* artistry and interpretations of the complexities and techniques of the repertoire develops the students' *zowq,* or taste. Through this development, they can seek the aesthetic quality of affect in performance.

Reflecting on my experiences as a *santur* student of Payvar's classical *maktab*, it is notable that although my teachers never directly asked me to express sorrow in playing Iranian

music, they made their expectations of this aesthetic value clear through implication. For instance, *Ostad* Aliheidari emphasized the meaning of *hal* as "*ehsasi*" or "deep sad beauty" through his approval by comments such as, "good, this made my heart bleed or burn" or "you almost gave me tears today" on students' performances. *Ostad* Sabet, however, would rarely put it into definite words voluntarily. In my understanding of his method, he had a subtle way of aesthetic and emotional approval through the attentive mood and melancholic silence through which he confirmed the student's expressive performance.

One of my interlocutors who studied with both *Ostad* Sabet and another student of *Maktab* Payvar at different stages of his training confirmed that he also found different styles of teaching emotional aesthetics in his *ostads*' classrooms, even though they both followed *Maktab* Payvar. He found *Ostad* Sabet's subtle way of education more easily connectable for a more advanced student because he gives them a broader space, with fewer hints, to explore more independently after they have developed their *zowq* and sufficient skills to express musically (Personal interviews, 2023). Yet, even in more subtle pedagogies such as *Ostad* Sabet's method, the most significant and central source of developing *zowq* and expression of affect is *ostad's* performance and imitating what he does in the classroom. Thus, the primary model for aesthetic quality and emotional expression is *ostad's* creation of *hal* as a model of *isalat* (authentic performance) in the classroom. Only after many years of education and self-developing and correcting with *ostad* is a student capable of independent self-expression based on the trained framework of *isalat* in that *maktab*.

In addition to the different methods of aesthetic education of sorrow exemplified in the cases of *Ostad* Aliheidari and *Ostad* Sabet's classrooms, the quality of hal and its aesthetic

expression is sometimes not referred to as "sorrow" or even "hal" by professional musicians. Instead of using the terminology regarding *huzn* and dark moods or hal associated with Sufism, they prefer to conceptualize it as an aesthetic depth of affect in performance cultivated by the musician's *zowq* and musical and emotional maturity. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I suggest the word "*ehsasi*" (passionate) as one of the equivalents of hal through which I could relate more commonly to my interlocutors (personal interviews, 2023). By this distinction, many *ostads* would not give students direct advice on emotions but only the word "*ziba*" (beautiful), which can be misleading due to its broad scope.

It is crucial to note that hal or aesthetics of sorrow in Iranian *maktab* learning is embedded within the music material of the *radif,* which is closely associated with Persian love poetry and *'erfan* philosophy. This characteristic is represented not only in the lyrics and vocal centrality of Iranian music but also in the instrumental accompaniment of the lyric phrases of *gushehs* and their systematic structurization based on Persian poetry. As I analyze through more details and examples in Chapter 4, love and Sufi poetry are present as a structural frame of main *gushes* such as *masnavi* and *Saqi-nameh* (Khazraei 2018), as well as in the thematic relevance of *gusheh* such as *Leily-o-Majnoun* and *Khosro-Shirin*. There are also many pieces with a relevant poetic title and expressive mood referring to sadness such as *Hazin* (adj. of *huzn*, sorrowful) or *Gham-angiz* (consistently sad). While many of these *gushes* are vocal, instrumental *gushes* can also direct the Persian musician to the poetics of cathartic love through their intertextuality. In *maktab* education, the students are required to grasp and learn the conventions of expressing these meanings and emotions by understanding the repertoire and delivering its musical and poetic content. They

internalize the semiotic references of aesthetics and establish their interpretation of poetic meaning by working closely with an *ostad* to develop their own *zowq* and emotional expression.

In musical *maktab*, a recurring cycle of listening, imitating, and correcting is often involved, which is part of the learning tradition. In this sense, there is no precise or framed model except the version by the *ostad*, which is the outcome of his years of training, individualized style, and artistic competency. Even though this aesthetic expression is undefinable in formulas, students realize the *ostad's* style of interpretation through a long-term master-disciple relationship and through understanding the poetic and metaphorical framework within Persian culture that impact the musical material. As a result, *maktab* is a practice and evolving process that happens through the interaction of humans, aesthetics, content, and pedagogical elements.

Ethnomusicologist Margaret Caton (2008) describes this developmental process in the literary allegories of *Haft shahr-e 'eshq* (*Seven stages of perfection)* in *'erfan* in her ethnographic research on the biography of Morteza Varzi, an Iranian distinguished kamancheh-player. This quality—also present in other forms of Persian arts and mystic traditions—comprises *isalat* (the genuine heritage of authenticity) of learning upon which students are urged by the *ostad* to build upon relying on their development of artistic skills, *zowq*, and advanced attitudes. For instance, Nettl's famous quotation from his Iranian *ostad*, Noor-Ali Borumand, emphasizing that "you will never understand this music" (Nettl 2015, 157) implicitly refers to the aesthetic element of perception and expression, which Borumand, as a traditionalist, does not find attainable for a non-Iranian. Although this

notion of *isalat* does not apply to all Iranian musicians, and indeed, authenticity is always a contested category, it had a significant impact on the dissemination of traditionalist *maktabs* in Iran during the 1960s and afterward.

Ostad and the Lineage

The musical *maktab* shares many comparable dimensions with the meaning of *maktab* (school) and *tariqa* (path) in the Sufi literature, arts, and practice: flexibility of approach, imitative and yearning progress, master-disciple tradition, and an individualistic self-cultivating ideal of development which lead to refined creativity and ethics. These features stand out in establishing the artistic, poetic, and Sufi training schools centralized around the core of a master, "*ostad*". In Persian arts and philosophy, the *ostad* seems to be an individual human, but the epitome of the knowledge, wisdom, and virtues gained that should be distributed to those ready to gain. He is known to be the extract of the age and maturity of the fruit that has absorbed the care, attention, and light for growing, as well as being nurtured into its genuine soil of *zowq* (talent) and *zat* (good nature). He gains and receives it from the sources, and he is then the source to transmit to others. One of my interlocutors emphasizes the importance of *Ostad's* lineage and its transmission,

> In our music, it is very crucial to receive your training from the *sarcheshmeh* (headspring, source), from a master who has received the knowledge and ethics of music from the best teachers and has made sincere and devoted efforts to preserve it and to teach it generously. The *ostad* is the most crucial matter in Iranian music training.
>
> (personal interviews, 2023)

Not only the content of Sufi poetry and mysticism but also the biographical approach of many poets is related to the development of self and the personal path, achieved through

dedication to a spiritual master or leader. For instance, Mowlana Jalal ad-Din Mohammad Balkhi (also known as Rumi), the great poet-mystic of the 13th century, was highly dedicated to his spiritual master, Shams Tabrizi—an old dervish from the city of Tabriz— who helped the poet break away from the confinement of Islamic jurisprudent. Before their historical encounter, Rumi was a well-respected clergyman. Regardless of their ambiguous individual relationship, Rumi's love of Shams and passionate attachment to his deep sorrow for separation from Shams also stands as an allegory for Rumi's "transformation into an intoxicated celebrant of the mysteries of Divine Love poetry" (Blodget & Mannani 2017, 20-21; Chittick 2013) as a Sufi's search of the Divine.

Another example of the *maktab* resemblance to Sufi schools is Attar's well-known mystic work from the twelfth century, *Mantiq al-Tayr (The Conference of the Birds)*. In this allegorical text, a group of birds gather to seek their legendary king, the *Simurgh* (phoenix). The metaphorical arduous journey made possible through the hoopoe's leadership has joyous and demoralizing moments. The thirty birds (literally *si murgh[42]*) who make it to the abode of the *Simurgh* finally attain the transformative moment of pure modesty, which itself shows them as worthy companions to the king, resulting in their infusion with a luminous new life in the reflection of their own image as a *Simurgh*. It is the king that all the birds seek; in reality, this is none other than their own reflection. Regarding the

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[42] As discussed in Chapter 2 regarding the Persian terminology, the multiplicity of references both literal and metaphoric is also notable here. The word *simurgh* in Persian literally consists of the words "*si*" (thirty) and "*murgh*" (birds) as well as independently meaning of *simurgh* (the mythical superior bird). In this poetic treatise, Attar gives the highest character as of a leader and master to the *simurgh* who is also an ancient mythical bird in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and the narratives of ancient Persia. Ferdowsi's *simurgh* is attributed to the Pre-Islamic Persia and characterized as the savior of the chosen heroes, nurturing, and advising them in times of doom.

transmutation of the meta-sign in molding the *Simurgh* of one's personal truth, based on

Meister Eckhart's observations, Fatemeh Keshavarz (2006, 125) analyzes,

> On the one hand, the Simurgh is just a simple bird that embodies other birds in the story. On the other, it has the quality of being unconditioned by relativity, and thus the disontological ability to transmute into a higher level of existence the moment it is supposed to have been captured, grasped, named or in any way divested of its transcendence.

The process of cognitive construction of the mystic "truth" has many dimensions built upon individual, social, and historical methods, which are bound intrinsically with the evolution of the "self" in the perpetual interaction of the seeker with the world. "Attar's Simurgh is therefore indispensable as the poetic site of struggle for discovery and reconstruction of the notions of the self and the truth beyond the limits of convention." (Ibid., 125-6)

In addition to its poetic importance and pervasive philosophical reference through imaging the emergent world of the birds by Attar, *Mantiq al-Tayr* presents allegories of "a journey, verbal echoes of 'being' as 'becoming'" (Ibid., 116) which correspond with Iranian artists' adventurous quests, compelling urges to seek perfection, and personal longing to make the journey. These analogies are significant in the Persian intellectual context. Their influence is part of the Iranian collective awareness of life through the philosophical and ethical role of public education and the integrated metaphors and semiotics that construct the Persian understanding of philosophical concepts.

In *maktab*, the teachings of the master and the master's masters are quoted and repeated in the classroom sessions and are then set as a source of reference and evaluation for the scale of artistry. The imagined becoming of the *Simurgh* is followed step by step through self-cultivation assisted by 'the mentor,' *ostad*. Thus, it is not only the teacher's lineage that

defines the pedagogy of a *maktab*, but also the genealogy of artistic and human attitudes that had been received from the previous generations.

Listening Tradition

According to anthropologist William O. Beeman (2007, 46), Islamic conservatism creates a distinction between "listening" and "hearing" on the matter of music. In this sense, listening to the music—as actively attending to the music—is only allowed in religious, Quranic, and ceremonial contexts or by oneself to relieve tension and cultivate emotional restraint. This distinction—although subject to interpretation by different religious leaders in Shiʻa societies such as Iran—permits inadvertent hearing of music, such as in public places or radio, while at the same time prohibiting non-attentive listening to (hearing) the Quran as "sinful" (Beeman 2007, 46). However, it needs clarification that in this distinction between the permissibility of "*gush-dadan"* (listening) and "*shanidan*" (hearing) in the Islamic context, the issue lies within the *object* of listening rather than the act. If the action concerns the recitation of the holy Quran recitation, it must be listened to attentively; otherwise, it is sinful. However, in the case of music, attentive listening is prohibited because it represents a deliberate distraction from the concentration on God.

In a more specific sense, *samāʻ* or "hearing[43]" is Islam's most widely known expression of mystical life. However, it was also the major cause of differences among the schools and the views of authorities on the path of Sufism (Schimmel 1975, 179). In the tradition of mystical *samāʻ*, an accepted principle is of the different states of readiness of the listener for music and the guidance that only the advanced seeker can take the experience of

[43] In music, "listening" is preferred as a referential meaning even though "hearing" is also used as a general term.

listening to music. Some Muslim philosophers like Ibn Arabi (1165-1240 C.E.) maintain

that the novice should be either forbidden from listening or only allowed to listen in the

presence of a teacher and that the advanced seeker no longer needs music for achieving the

mystical state.

However, Ghazali, a Persian Muslim philosopher and theologian with well-received views

in Iran, avoids making positive or negative judgments. In his opinion, whether to permit or

forbid music depends partly on the "inner preparedness or the inner resources of the

listener in question." (Shehadi 1995, 123) Through his moderate interpretation, Ghazali

values the music that contributes to the dominance of the love of God in a prepared heart,

stating that "listening to a beautiful voice that sings a well-balanced melody enhanced by

morally accepted poetry and the right instruments is as such permitted" (Ibid., 130). This

combination of secular and sacred approaches to a controversial aspect of music within

Islamic thought and authority introduced a more flexible range of evaluation based on

quality and purpose. Such moderated religious philosophies—directly or indirectly—added

to the discourse about listening quality in Iranian Shi'a culture and its impact on the history

of music performance and training both from technical and moral perspectives. In an

interview, a distinguished *tar* player and composer who studied music for many years

under *Ostad* Houshang Zarif (*tar*) and *Ostad* Payvar explains to me what a beautiful

performance is:

> When you listen to a [professional] performer, it is indeed their character and
> personality that you are listening to. It is not merely the sound of their *mezrab*, but
> the one of their inner souls. Whatever they are as a person inside, it is heard in the
> music. That is why you may not enjoy some advanced performances regardless of
> their high skills.
>
> (personal interviews, 2016)

Also, a famous saying by *Ostad* Hossein Tehrani (1912-1974), a highly claimed musician

and the father of *tombak* performance in Iran is continuously quoted in many *maktabs*:

> In music, 99% of the value goes to the personality of the performer and only 1% to
> the skills. Always remember that the sound of your instrument is the sound of your
> heart. If your heart is sincere and pure, your music will resonate with your audience,
> and your performance will be respected.
>
> (Tehrani, interview in the 1960s, private archive, translated by the author)

Regarding the musical *maktabs*, as mentioned before, the close circle of connection

between the student and master in the form of *ostadi-shagerdi* and the central role of the

ostad gives a significant dominance to the act of listening attentively to the ostad's artistry

and the aesthetics of his lineage. A student constantly listens to the *ostad* in the classroom,

imitates and corrects the aesthetic points, and later transmits these trainings to the next

generation. Thus, the lineage acts as a chain of transmitting aesthetics and expression in a

pedagogical system that profoundly relies on human connection.

A more functional reason for considering listening as an important method in *maktab* is

that many technical and expressive aspects of musicality cannot be transcribed in Iranian

music notation. Even for the particular cases that can be partially transcribed, the tradition

of the Iranian notation system discourages very precise dry transcription except for

analytical purposes. Based on the centrality of improvisation and individualized

interpretation of *radif* music, the common thought is that precise notation and

homogeneity lead to freezing the fluidity of *radif*, application of embellishments, and

freedom of interpretive expression. Therefore, the primary appreciation of a lessen

happens through close listening to the teacher as a model in the classroom and the past

performances recorded by the prominent masters. Accordingly, in the *maktab* tradition, students are often encouraged and even assigned to listen to the prominent performers' music frequently and regularly and to take the mood of each *dastgah* and *gusheh* as well as the artistic highlights and individualized styles of expression. In an interview regarding the aesthetics of improvisation in Iranian music, *Ostad* Sabet mentions that even at the highly advanced levels of his own, he still listens to the recordings of the great improvisers of the past generation, such as *Ostad* Payvar and *Ostad* Shahnaz (*tar*). He does this to analyze their creative process of building up musical sentences, to remember their most detailed embellishments, and drink in their individualized expression of emotional aesthetics. *Ostad* Sabet considers this evolved process of analytical and attentive listening to be an advanced stage of learning and an inspiring source for aesthetic cultivation (Personal interview, 2016).

Another example of this process is visible in an old documentary on several distinguished musicians of Iran. In this film, we see *Ostad* Payvar in his music practice room, listening meticulously to an old recording from the legendary master of *santur*, Habib Soma'ee (1905-1946). Sitting at his *santur*, *Ostad* Payvar imitates the same material as the recording. Soon, we hear Payvar's newly developed version of the audio material based on his emotional expression, now an individualized and independent improvisation.

Listening quality also has ethical dimensions in training the appropriate audience of *hal*. Like most *maktab* masters, my teacher's first lesson emphasized learning the tradition of listening to Iranian music through deep attention and focus. When a performer played music, we were expected to concentrate, think, feel, and keep silent without interruption or

distracted gaze. This process would allow us to absorb the musical affect and the meditative state of transformed mood. Thus, the quality of listening to *hal* became part of the *hal* itself. While applying the listening tradition in music may seem contradictory to the case of Islamic authorization mentioned earlier, it shares a similar ideology of deep listening, silence, and self-cultivating similar to the sacred listening to the Quranic or mystic poetry recitation[44].

From 1957 to 1979, the Iranian national radio station, Radio Iran, broadcast a public musical program called *Golha"* ("Flowers of Persian Song and Music"). This broadcast took influential steps toward nourishing the ears of the professionals, as well as exposing the average listener to the *dastgah* tradition of prominent masters and their emerging students. Programs were a mixture of musical pieces, poetry, and literary commentary. Through them, especially during the golden age of broadcast led by writer and musicologist Davoud Pirnia, many of the foremost literary, academic, and musical talents of the time were heard, and some of the greatest vocalists of the century launched their careers. Performing classical music arranged with the recitation of meticulously selected poetry was a platform for the audience to get accustomed to the listening tradition of Iranian music. The boundless accessibility to the greatest soloists and best orchestras and ensembles of the time trained the audience's ears and developed their sense of aesthetics.

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[44] It is noteworthy that in the history of Persian poetry and literature, poets would recite their new poems creatively and artistically-pleasing in the patrons' courts or for the appreciative audience. More than a textual artwork, classical poetry was a performance harmonious to the mood, time, and the occasion of the audience. This is evident in many famous works and styles, especially by Rumi, Khayyam and Hafez. Thus it seemed as if music was put into words rather than the opposite.

Golha program was prestigious, consistent, and influential in forming the public's taste regarding the perception of hal. It set up the professional ground for musicians' aesthetic expression, providing a larger audience than private gatherings. Soon, the program and its off-shoots became a stylistic genre known as *Radio-Golha*. Moreover, these programs later became a substantial archive and source of learning for the musicians and pupils of the next generation, especially after the 1979 revolution, which closed the program and terminated many musical activities.

Another influential factor regarding the listening resources was the publication of *radif* in written format. The accessibility to multiple versions of the same repertoire and its live or recorded samples paved the way for comparing various interpretations. This new change expanded music learners' understanding of multiple aspects of style and emotional expression and created new aesthetic models. Before this time, a performer could play only his own works or the repertoire passed down to him from the master. The repertoire could vary from what other students learned from that master. It was also at the risk of loss due to *ostad's* forgetting or changing the *radif* from session to session or during his senior years. In an interview, *Ostad* Payvar mentions his high regrets about the best musicians of the previous generations who did not have the possibility or intention to publish all their works during their lifetime. Concentrating on this goal as a necessity for the educational benefit was one of the outcomes of Vaziri's *maktab*, which was later disseminated through the *maktabs* of his student Saba and his successors, including Payvar.

Master-Apprentice Relationship

In the *maktab* workshops that produced the illuminations famous throughout the Persian Empire, the role of imitation was predominant, to the point that a loyal and well-established apprentice whose work was worthy of being compared with the master would take a nickname such as "the second (master's name)" and receive that level of respect. In music, the nickname "*khalifeh*" (successor) was given to the leading student to mark him as a *namayandeh* (representative) of the master. This title was both professional and ethical. Besides representing the *maktab* in performance, the *khalifeh* took many roles, including assisting the *ostad* in any way needed and teaching tasks. Simultaneously, the *khalifeh* would learn methods and traditions of teaching as well as gain experience (similar to an internship) under a mentor, developing confidence in more serious roles.

In addition to the knowledge and professional practice, the *ostad* would take special time, patience, and efforts for moral education of the *khalifeh* to nurture a sincere, reliable, and well-grown keeper of the *maktab* and its authenticity. The master, the repertoire, and the students were all part of an intangible heritage and proof of the *ostad's* contribution to his *maktab* and its future. Although the title of *khalifeh* has been barely used since the mid-20th century, the meaning and respected role of the *ostad's* most prominent representative titled "*shagerd-e arshad*" (senior apprentice) or "*janeshin-e ostad*" (successor of *Ostad*) remains the same. Not only for the public but also for the student and the master, it is an honor to achieve a role in the continuation of a *maktab* and its genealogy.

The ostad's pedagogy and teaching method are also transmitted under his direct supervision. I witnessed my teacher, *Ostad* Aliheidari's pride for having consistent training

with the great *Ostad* Payvar's successor, Saeed Sabet. As a follower, I also had a high goal to continue my *santur* training at the advanced level with Ostad Sabet, which I did for many years. Moreover, in my conversations with *Ostad* Payvar in which I asked questions related to music education and the practice of *santur*, he advised me to consult with his successor, *Ostad* Sabet, to get an assured result. I realized that Payvar completely trusted Sabet's judgment, teaching, and personality. Although Payvar's students were very close as of a family circle to him, his very few appointed successors were the center of his professional and moral trust. Sabet was also the successor and substitute master in Payvar's private class after his retirement due to a severe illness.

With the authority and honor of being a successor to a great master, came the responsibility of carrying the torch of the *maktab* and disseminating *ostad's* works and teachings. In my classes with *Ostad* Aliheidari and Ostad Sabet, they occasionally gave me the responsibility of teaching other students under their direct or indirect supervision. In these situations, I realized that they deliberately diminished their authority and direct presence in the classroom (e.g., running errands, answering phone, or keeping busy with other matters) to build my confidence as a young educator and other students' trust in a senior classmate. When needed, they gave me advice or feedback and mentioned important points in the matter of teaching. This was how their *Ostads* had also trained them in pedagogical methods and in my conversations with *Ostad* Payvar's students, they mentioned the same method of training educators. When *Ostad* Payvar began to no longer take on students, he assigned them to work permanently with his advanced students on special times and days of the week in Payvar's classroom.

My interlocutors also mentioned personal examples regarding *Ostad* Payvar's higher expectations of senior students who had talent and future for teaching than the ordinary students. Thus, the *ostad* made them work more extensively on reviewing, dealing with students, and being prepared for every aspect that a teacher is responsible for. In this way, the *ostad* would confirm when the student was ready to teach by recommending the student. Having the master's permission to teach was a part of the ethics and priorities in master-disciple relationship (personal interviews, 2023). I remember when I was invited to teach in music schools and institutions after my university graduation—even though I had received a BA in music performance, I asked my *maktab ostads'* permission to teach independently and started my career with their consent and blessings.

Other examples of this type of genealogical and musical succession includes the publication and revision of audio recordings of *maktab* Saba on violin by his successor Rahmatollah Badi'i, known as *Saba Kouchoulou* (Little Saba), for his excellence in performing and interpretation of Saba's violin style and works; and more recently, the rise of Homayoun Shajarian the biological son and musical representative of the vocal style of *Ostad* Mohammad Reza Shajarian. These successors remained loyal to fulfilling these responsibilities in addition to developing their own innovations, personal styles and teaching methodologies, and musical activities. For instance, my teacher, *Ostad* Sabet, had a full weekly schedule for teaching *santur* in his own private class, in *Ostad* Payvar's private class, and in the University of Arts and *Honarestan* Music Conservatory in Tehran in addition to recording audio albums of Payvar's repertoire and revising his new publishable material. He also worked with Payvar's music ensembles and attended as a *santur* and ensemble jury in various musical events in different parts of Iran in his master Payvar's

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place. This is an example of the weight of responsibilities for the students who become professional musicians, educators, and successors of an *ostad's maktab*.

For performing occasions, it is usually a part of students' consultation with the *ostad* to choose a proper repertoire until they are advanced enough to decide independently about the arrangements. In Payvar's *maktab*, the logic of the repertoire matters since it has an impact in the appropriateness of the content and building up the mood. Through the organized order of the pieces in each *dastgah* in Payvar's publications, the performers of his *maktab* become sensitive and thoughtful to the arrangement of the pieces. There are additional points regarding the aesthetics and affect in performance that are transmitted through these consultations. Regarding the timing for public performance, my *ostad* Sabet advised me not to play a lengthy program. "Always finish when the audience still feels thirsty and yearning for more! Never play to the point of boredom even if you play the most beautiful and technically demanding pieces!", he emphasized. I observed that he usually finished his stage performances with an exciting and dynamic piece which would leave the audience at the height of enthusiasm. This is also the format of the old performances when the musicians wrap up with an upbeat, accentuated, or fast piece. It was even customary to finish with a *reng* which was an instrumental piece for accompanying the classical dance.

The *ostad's* mentoring also extends to mentoring about becoming established as a respected artist, a particular difficult issue due to the "immorality" of music in post-1979 Iranian society. The *ostad* gave guiding advice on moral and affective performance and aesthetic credit for *maktab* presenters. Many of these ethical instructions were for the purpose of elevating the status of art music and musicians. For instance, in the *maktab* of

my *Ostad* Aliheidari, as a continuation of the *Maktab* Payvar, we were taught from the beginning stage to carry our instrument with pride, never to open it on the floor as a *motreb* (lower status) entertainer, and never play music where it was not respected or where the audience could not keep quiet in full attention. Due to the social situation in Iran—especially since the Qajar era—placing an instrument on the floor symbolized motrebs' behavior of keeping the case open for the audience to throw money or tips for the music service, and the manners related to this cliché were unacceptable in *maktab*. In these contexts, the *maktabs* taught respect for music as a valued art and respected expertise rather than entertainment.

Also, through a strict ban on music after 1979 for nearly a decade, the new regime prohibited any public display of musical instruments including carrying them in the street or in personal vehicles without an authorized note from the government. Professional musicians had to report their intentions and status to the government, to be questioned by the authorities, and finally receive an approved identification for carrying their musical instrument. Without official proof the instrument would be destroyed, or the owner could be convicted. One of my interlocutor's remembers, "carrying an instrument was considered as carrying a weapon! You had to apply for permits with your photo ID attached to them!" (personal interviews, 2023) During this era *motrebi* was also pronounced illegal, and the new policies added to the sensitivity of musicians' identity and social class.

According to his students, Payvar emphasized that a classical performer does not perform in a session where the audience is not attentively listening but instead whispering or drinking alcohol. The performer should present himself in a respected way—with visual

elegance—as a sign of respect for the content and occasion of the performance (personal interviews, 2023). Untimely applause or questions during a performance ruins the mood and aesthetic meaning of music and the audience should be aware of the type of event they are attending, as classical music is different than ritual or party music. *Ostad* Payvar believed that each genre of music should be played according to their aesthetics and context. Accordingly, the chosen content and performing manners were as important as the musical interpretation and the affect. These manners should be respected mutually by performers and listeners and *maktab* performers have a responsibility in educating the society regarding these matters (personal interviews, 2023).

The image of self-esteem is also a part of the Payvar's *maktab* codes. I recall an incident when a young pupil had been invited to play *santur* in his school for the non-expert audience. According to his description, after the performance, he reached out to his school mates to ask how the performance was. He mentioned to *Ostad* Sabet that they liked the performance. *Ostad* said, "when you perform for a non-expert audience, it is better not to ask them about how they liked your performance. Try to do your best and be confident about your abilities. Keep your self-esteem without yearning for their approval. If they feel like expressing their enthusiasm to you, they can come to you". On the other hand, the performer never shows ego in front of the senior performers or masters and always asks their permission before starting to perform in their presence. In *Maktab* Payvar pupils learn about the respect for music and musicians from the early stages of their education. These are a few examples of the effort to elevate professional and social status for honorable musicians, something they were deprived of in the past.

Ethics of Maktab: A New Identity

I described my vivid memories of *Ostad* Aliheidari's classroom at home from nearly twenty years ago in the first chapter. In my interviews with *Ostad* Payvar's students, I was also impressed by my interlocutors' detailed descriptions and memories of their *ostad's* home-class and their feeling of loss and longing when the class building was changed after *Ostad*'s retirement due to illness and when the buildings were finally torn down after his death. All the classroom memories they mentioned to me were attached to the detailed sense of space, atmosphere, identity, interaction with fellow-students and close master-disciple relationships. A photo of *Ostad* Payvar at his home among some of his students from three generations, shows his intimacy with his them as of a family (*Figure 7*). Many of them became great musicians and teachers.

Figure 7. Ostad Payvar at his home, surrounded by three generations of his students and a student from Japan (1982) photo courtesy of Qumars Piraglu

The historical resources also confirm a close relationship as a family between the *ostad* and

especially the more distinguished pupils which extended to the pleasure time out of the

classroom and family bonds. Vaziri went to mountains and trips with his students; and

Saba's home was always open to the deserving learners, and they had meals together

during a day of working together. Even in modern times of the 1980s and 1990s, as was

mentioned by my interlocutors, *Ostad* Payvar had weekly mountain trips, countryside

picnics and historical sightseeing with his young generation of students. In these trips, each

student had a special responsibility, learned the meaning of teamwork, felt the sense of

belonging to a musical community, and shared quality time as a respectful family with

fellow students of the *maktab*. Intimacy could mean anything from doing renovations

together (e.g., repairing air conditioning system), being given access to the *ostad's* music manuscripts and personal archive, running errands, having meals with the *ostad*, or even receiving financial or intellectual help when needed. It also meant keeping the *ostad* posted on their personal life, and in general, cultivating a strong sense of belonging to a small secure society or family (personal interviews, 2023).

With this collaboration and emotional bond, a great extent of musical and personal values was formed and enjoyed through the *maktab* training. There are many stories regarding the dominant involvement of the *ostad's* in the apprentice's life events and vice versa. I frequently heard from my teachers, old masters, and even younger generations of *maktab* learners whom I interviewed about the pleasure of being part of the activities and daily life of their *ostad* (personal interviews, 2023). Their engagement was often treated as an extra way of teaching and experiencing what the music student had to learn beyond the repertoires and technicalities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Pedagogy of Hal

This chapter analyzes some of the main aspects of the pedagogical content, methods, and styles of transmission of aesthetics in Iranian *maktab*. In addition to musical and poetic analysis of the *radif*, I use my observations, field interviews, autoethnography, and archival study in description and comparison of various methods of transmission in Persian classical music as stylized by some of the most nationally acclaimed Iranian musicians. My analytical examples are mere samples of the points from *radif* and its performance that may be mentioned in a classroom or be part of the performer's internal perception. I do not try to theorize exhaustive pieces of *radif* in detail. Instead, I try to clarify through simple examples how some hidden or symbolic elements works internally with the *zowq*, perception, and sense of aesthetics and interpretative skills of the performer or music learner.

Pedagogy and the Role of Poetry

The vocal centrality in Iranian music and the structure of *radif* repertoire connects the aesthetic quality of *hal* to the rhetoric and imagery of Persian love poetry. My research includes comparative analysis of examples from *radif* and Persian literature, highlighting the intertextuality of mystical and lyrical themes such as "burning love, separation, and

sorrow", and showing how they share commonalities (e.g., semiotically, poetically, semantically) with the content and structure of Iranian music material and its transmission. The interpretive relation between these poetics (literary) and aesthetic (musical) elements are approachable more precisely through the understanding of Persian poetry and a closer look at the content and structure of *radif*.

A disciple's background and interest in literature and poetic comprehension play an important role in their interpretive skills of music and development of *zowq* during education. Many students with no considerable background in literature soon become interested in because of exposure to the musical material. It is also necessary for the teacher to have a high knowledge of the classical poetry and its principles in the art of *avaz* and expression of articulation and rhetoric composition of poetry in Persian music. Additionally, there are many levels of close emotional and creative connections between Iranian classical music and Persian poetry which direct the process of music learning and creation of affect through musical expression. I categorize these connections in three groups: 1) thematic connection; 2) rhythmic-metric connection; and 3) emotional interpretative connection. Many *maktab* teachers direct their pedagogical approach toward students' understanding and development of these three levels during their *maktab* education, especially in relation to the *radif*. I present several examples of the connections from *radif* repertoire and what I have observed in *ostad*'s methods of teaching in music classrooms as the following:

1. Thematic Connection

There are many *gushehs* in the twelve *dastgah* of *radif* with poetic themes and titles, for which we have no record on why and how they became associated. However, for a Persian encounter, the association of the title of a *gusheh* with sorrow or an indexical meaning of catharsis or emotional intensity, such as love and separation or annihilation, often enhances the aesthetic dimension of performance and interpretive context. This characteristic is especially influential when the apprentice encounters these thematic connections for the first time during the process of learning. Therefore, these titles connect the Persian learner to a poetic metaphor, or a historical and literary meaning regarding emotions which needs to be expressed musically. In *Table 1*, I suggest twelve examples of the more common *gushehs* in the twelve *dastgahs* with such recognizable connotations from *radif*, listed with their literal or referential translations (translated by the author):

Table 1. List of gushehs in the twelve dastgah system with thematic connection to love and sorrow

No.	Dastgah Title	Gusheh Title	Title Translation
1	*Shour*	*Asheq-Kosh*	Lover-Killer
2	*Abu'ata*	*Khosro-Shirin*	Famous Tragic Love Story
3	*Bayat Tork*	*Shekasteh*	Heart-Broken
4	*Afshari*	*Jameh-Daran*	Torn-Apart
5	*Dashti*	*Gham-Angiz*	Sorrowful
6	*Segah*	*Mouyeh*	Whine with Dolour
7	*Chahargah*	*Maqloub*	Defeated
8	*Homayoun*	*Leily-Majnoun*	Famous Tragic Love Story
9	*Bayat Esfahan*	*Souz-o Godaz*	Burning and Melting
10	*Nava*	*Oshaq*	Lovers
11	*Rast-Panjgah*	*Leily-Majnoun*	Famous Tragic Love Story
12	*Mahour*	*Delkash*	Mesmerizing

There is no definite evidence of why and by whom most of these titles were chosen. *Radif* is basically a collection of improvised short pieces often from anonymous origins and traditional melody types. The pieces are sometimes influenced by local and folk tunes, short songs, reciting traditions, and individual creations with no record of composing ownership. However, it can be inferred that the emotional entities and concepts, poetic themes, melancholic metaphors, and tragic stories such as above, inspired *radif* musicians in their improvisation, performing, and teachings throughout the history. These types of themes and titles dominate the *radif* and composed music of Iran.

A recurring example is the importance of *imagery* through these abstract themes. Thus, the intertextual aspects of narration act as symbols of the content and expression in Persian music in accordance with the main themes in love poetry. *The radif* contains many *gushehs* and *gusheh*-fragments with the theme of tragic love stories, such as Leily-Majnoun (Leily and Majnoun) and Khosro-Shirin (Khosro and Shirin) from the famous *Khamsa* (*Five Treasures*) of the Persian poet, Nezami (1141–1209). Other *gushehs* tag human sentiments, such as *Gham-angiz* (sorrowful), *Hazin* (sorrowful, full of *huzn*), *Mouyeh* (whine with dolour), *Bidad* (outcry). Some *gushehs* refer to the philosophy of devotional love such as *gusheh Oshaq* (lovers) and *Asheq-kosh* (the lover-killer), *Delkash* (mesmerizing), *Souz-o Godaz* (burning and melting), *Jameh-daran* (torn-apart). To a Persian leaner of *radif*, these are familiar titles and themes with reference to sorrowful sentiments and tragic love which create curiosity as well as connection to the intertextual symbolism and poetic imagery.

Other *gusheh* titles include names of places, folklores, literary forms (e.g. *masnavi, dobeyti*), historical references to the traditions of the ancient Persia, natural elements, and country

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life (mostly in Saba's innovative *radifs*), and the names of the individuals. The titles in

Persian classical music are important emotional and indexical contexts since Persian *radif*

hardly ever narrates or attaches to a story directly. *Gushehs*' titles only attach the poetic

themes with music. In that sense, Persian traditional music is abstract and metaphoric as of

a single image or plate comprised of multiple interpretations of a story, which is also found

in Persian visual arts. An example of a metaphoric theme with multiple scenes in one title

can be found in the Persian miniature art illustrated in *Figures 8, 9,* and *10.*

As it can be seen in *Figure 8,* a famous illustration "The Court of Gayumars" from

Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp by Ferdowsi depicted during Safavid era, the spiral outline

fades the borderline between multiple spaces while it also directs the focus toward a

circular mobility and self-generating energy. The indefinite borderline and lack of realistic

perspective intertwined with symbolic colours and elements of nature from a bird's-eye

view allow the viewer to make multiple interpretations and explorations. With no use of

realistic perspective, the multiplicity of spaces, directions and symbolic motifs within a

spiral frame engages the viewer's imagination with the Persian imagery of multiple scenes

in one plate.

Figure 8. "The Court of Gayumars" from Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp by Ferdowsi. Depicted during Safavid era (Photo from Khan Academy). Depicting the spiral outline, multiple floating spaces, symbolic elements of nature

With a more specific focus in *Figure 9,* the lower large space is filled by an abundance of figures and embellishments comprised of minor spaces, colours, and population of characters including human and animals. This large space contains smaller spaces all connected through non-stopping spiral movements. The abundance with warm colours, embellishments, and fertility, also a symbol of Persian Gardens of Paradise on earth, is to enhance the interpretation of power and life for the land and the Persian king, whom is

referred to as the King of the world. In *Shahnameh* narratives, King Kayumars is the very first pioneer of kingdom of Persia and indeed, of the universe.

Figure 9. Depiction of many figures and embellishments of the spaces, colors, and plurality to enhance the iconicity of the king and his power. (Photo from Khan Academy).

A close look at the third large space on upper part of the painting in *Figure 10,* shows the main figure, the king, in the centre. Many smaller round spaces and shapes such as the tree branches and elements around him direct the view upward to the heavenly (celestial) space. While the dualism, the binary worlds and contrast of dark and light colours and depiction of seasons in vegetations aesthetically refer to the Persian Pre-Islamic philosophy, the eternal unity and continuous circulation suggests the Sufi philosophy visible in many Iranian paintings. There is no linear storyline, but multiple simultaneous

sequences in one image. The important point is that this multi-spatial plate illustrates one scene of the story although it is mobile through imagination and multifaceted depiction of time. The scene is open to various perspectives, philosophies, and symbolic interpretations through the bird's-eye-view, floating elements, faded borderlines and internalized imagery. These features are the aesthetic aspects of Iranian arts through which many symbolic sources become connected.

Figure 10. Symbolic depiction of multiple worlds and dense details in spiral forms to interpret mobility and multiplicity of space and time in one scene and shaping a visual infinite perspective. There is no linear storyline, but multiple simultaneous scenes in one image. (Photo from Khan Academy)

For the vocal *gusheh*s of *radif*, however, the poetic reference is shaped more clearly by the lyrics upon which the melody is structured. As mentioned before, the most common lyrics in *radif* are from classical love poetry (especially *ghazal*), ethical and philosophical poems (e.g., *masnavi*) and occasionally, local tunes with romantic themes. As a result, the themes

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and titles of *gushes* in *radif* and inspired compositions, implicitly or explicitly, direct the mood and interpretation of performance through these titles or their first stanza, at least in the mind of the performer.

In music training, it is very important for the pupil to learn and recognize each *gusheh* by the title, which to some extent, contains the identity and *hal* of the *gusheh*. For instance, there are many renditions and versions of *gusheh Leily-Majnoun* (in <u>*dastgah*</u> Homayoun) in various *radifs* by different masters and improvisors. However, they all contain a shared essence (melodically, structurally, rhythmically, poetically, emotionally) that makes them recognizable as *Leily-Majnoun,* which should be memorized and learned by the performer. This essence is encapsulated through the intertextuality of the theme and title "*Leily-Majnoun*" with reference to the sad love story from Nezami's poems. Below I bring example quotes from the famous poetry on the legend of Leily and Majnoun to show the essence of the sentiments and symbolic emotions that flow instantly and vigorously into a Persian sense when encountering the title and theme of *Leily-Majnoun*. It should be remembered that translation into English may effect some sentimental content or expression.

> *Every breeze that blows   brings your scent to me.*
> *Every bird that sings   calls out your name to me.*
> *Every dream that appears   brings your face to me.*
> *Every glance at your face   has left its trace with me.*
> *I am yours, I am yours,   whether near or far;*
> *Your grief is mine, all mine,   wherever you are.*

(*Leily and Majnoun*, *Khamsa* by Nezami, Eng. translation link[45])

Also a prose version adapted by Colin Turner (1997) conveys the story and emotions

symbolized in the thoughts and self-monologues of Majnoun.

The future is veiled from our eyes. The threads of each man's fate extend well beyond the boundaries of the visible world. Where they lead, we cannot see. Who can say that today's key will not be tomorrow's lock, or today's lock not tomorrow's key? (p. 3)

Dearest heart, if I had not given my soul to you, it would have been better to give it up for good, to lose it forever. I am burning in love's fire; I am drowning in the tears of my sorrow. . . I am the moth that flies through the night to flutter around the candle flame. O invisible candle of my soul, do not torture me as I encircle you! You have bewitched me, you have robbed me of my sleep, my reason, my very being. (p. 15)

Time passes, but true love remains. The life of this world is, for the most part, nothing but a succession of illusions and deceptions. But true love is real, and the flames which fuel it burn forever, without beginning or end. (p. 31)

(Nezami, translated by Turner 1997)

Below I show an example of *Gusheh Leily-Majnoun* in *dastgah Homayoun* from Radif of

Ostad Saba for *santur*. The piece captures only one verse of the poem "Leily and Majnoun"

from the *Khamsa* book by Nezami. Yet, this one verse which shapes the whole *gusheh* in

instrumental and vocal sequence carries the abstract reference to the philosophy and

message of love from the whole story. The title of the *gusheh* encapsulates the whole

philosophical, musical and emotional target of the piece and gives it a recognizable identity.

Accordingly, a musician trained in *radif* can recognize any version of this *gusheh* by

listening based on the mood, musical mode and structure. Likewise, a skilful improvisor

can create various versions of Leily-Majnoun which carry multiple musical possibilities (as

in the multiple spiral spaces in the painting example) while standing loyal to the identical

musical framework of Leily-Majnoun (as the central scene and thematic focus of the king in

the previous painting). This is one of the sorrowful *gushehs* in dastgah Homayoun, known

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to bear the mood of a glorious, philosophical, lasting love, and sorrowful endurance. It is important to note that due to the nature of aesthetics and fluidity of meanings in the emotional contexts, these moods have not been theorized or textually defined and even if they have, they are considered subjective rather than theorized. However, the common sense, knowledge, and *zowq* which is sensed or orally mentioned in the classrooms bring these interpretations to an Iranian mind. The English translation of the verse, followed by a table instructing the vocal and instrumental parts (*Table 2*) and a transcribed version of the score (*Figure 11*) depicting the vocal and instrumental lines is presented below:

<div dir="rtl">

گرچه ز شراب عشق مستم

مجنون تر/عاشق تر از این کنم که هستم

</div>

Though like Majnoun, I am drunk by the wine of love

Let me drink more deeply, be more majnoun (possessed) by love

(*Leily and Majnoun, Khamsa* by Nezami, translated by the author)

Transcription and the abstract schema of vocal-instrumental sequences:

Table 2. The structural schema of Leily-Majnoun

Leily-Majnoun from Radif of Saba for Santur			
Period	**Line**	**Content**	**Type**
A	1	First Stanza	Vocal
	2 – 3	Response	Instrumental
B	4	Second Stanza	Vocal
	5	Response	Instrumental
A'	6 – 7	Second Stanza (Repeat)	Vocal

Figure 11. Leily-Majnoun in dastgah Homayoun, in Saba's radif for santur (adapted transcription by the author)

In the pedagogical system of *Maktab* Saba, Payvar, and some other classical methods, students are required to memorize and sing the vocal parts simultaneously with their instrumental performance. The poetry, its syllabic arrangement on the notes, and vocalization well-tuned to the melodies and the mood of the piece are significant parts of the lessons upon which the teacher and student spend diligent effort and sensitivity. Likewise, choosing beautiful poems, suitable for a *gusheh's* specific mood, gradual sequences, internal rhythm, and melodic models are part of the composer's *zowq* and artistic knowledge.

2. Rhythmic-Metric Connection

According to ethnomusicologist Mohammad Azadehfar's meticulous classification, the fluid rhythm in *radif* pieces consists of three types of metric structures: Free, fixed, and stretchable or elastic meter (Azadehfar 2011). Apart from the fixed meter—normally as very short pieces or *gushehs* marked by a time signature—the free and especially the stretchable meters are the unique and local aspects of Persian *radif*. These two types are also the most challenging rhythmic aspects of Persian music to learn and comprehend since they are not mathematically performable but require the performer to develop the appropriate inner aesthetic sense of many elements such as, timing, irregular phrasing, metric poetry, dynamic and agogic accentuation, fluid tempo, melodic and structural highlights, and the interpretive expression. Based on the vocal centrality of Persian music, many of the metric relations drive from Persian poetry and its quantitative (syllabic) structure that creates many levels of metric, rhythmic and temporal fluidity and diversity in Persian music. Through mastering these elements, the performer can express a wide range of emotions based on the developed *zowq* and sense of *hal*.

Over the past seven years of my teaching in Canada, I have experienced the effect of understanding Persian poetry on Iranian students' learning abilities of the *gushehs* and their more successful engagement with the non-measured pieces compared to the non-Iranian students. I have observed that even the Iranian Canadian students who do not have a sufficient knowledge of Persian language and poetry due to their immigration in early childhood or being born in Canada, have more difficulties in understanding and performing the elastic and free meters of *radif* pieces, hence the emotional understanding of the timing and rhythm in performance[46]. Persian poetry in the vocal *gushehs* creates analogical models in terms of the flexible rhythmic units, meter, syllabic durations, accents, and the contrasting balance between the free and pulsive rhythms and meters. This contrast often creates highlights for the mood and expressive elements as waves of emotional tension within the musical phrasing.

Many aesthetic relations are based on altering and releasing rhythmic-metric tension between the musical motives and phrases which mostly consist of, but not limited to call and response, repetitions, variations, fading in and out in the temporal and dynamic frames, *tempo-rubato* techniques, and non-fixed[47] time values. For instance, in a vocal piece in *radif*, the time values of the notes, rests and space between phrases vary depending on

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[46] I also observed that reading and translating the poem multiple times, breaking down its metaphoric and sonic elements and syllables and urging the students to find ways of memorizing and feeling the meaning of the accompanied poetry are gradually helpful. For non-Persian students in beginners' level, I only focus on translation and understanding the meaning and overall theme and mood of the poetry. However, I always encourage them to develop a better understanding through listening to Persian vocal music (avaz) and its combination with the instrumental through fluid meter and embellishments.

[47] By "non-fixed" here, I mean both types of free and stretchable meters, earlier cited from Azadehfar (2011)

the context, sound, and meaning of the lyrics. Due to the nature of *aruz*[48] and the quantitative[49] rhythmic system of Persian poetry, all the vocal parts of a piece are bound to a pulsive rhythm. However, in *avaz* (non-fixed metered pieces of radif originally for vocalization but also instrumental) this pulse combines with the free meter of the *gusheh* which results in a metric elasticity or "*ritm-e nahan*[50]" (hidden rhythm). Understanding the poetry and its rhythmic structure adds a framework for the rhythmic and accentual tension of music in terms of melodic phrasing and irregular grouping, and in more advanced levels, the interpretation and emotional aesthetics of expression.

Through freedom in the interpretation of the metric-rhythmic elasticity based on appreciation of Persian poetic rhythm, the performer creates the fluid mood and dynamics which are parts of the emotional expression and affect. Learning this aspect not only requires a general knowledge and understanding of the Persian poetic system, but also a development of its amalgamation with the *radif* and the composed repertoire. This is also the case for the non-vocal pieces that are interconnected with Persian poetry in less visible manners. Students soon learn that the time values, tempo, and interconnections are very flexible, and the interpretation is shaped by the cultivation of a common sense, *zowq*, and poetic understanding of time in musical sentences. However, the most important way to appreciate these is through listening.

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[48] Collection of certain patterns for organizing the number and order of short and long syllables in each hemistich; system of metric poetry requiring the consistency of a set pattern of long (-) and short (U) syllables; also a system to ascertain the consistency of rhythm in a poem (Azadehfar 2011, 346).

[49] The poetic rhythm made up of long and short syllables, the duration of which is determined by the amount of time needed for pronunciation without regard for accents or stresses. The examples of this metrical system are Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Greek and Latin (Azadehfar 2011, 79)

[50] Although seemed to be a personal choice of expression, I heard this word frequently from teachers during my years of learning and through my discussions with masters. I also find it very understandable and clarifying for the students when used in my teaching.

This approach is similarly taken for the fluidity of silence and musical rests between and within the phrases which is often linked with the accompanying poetry and interpreted based on the meaning and context of the poetry. Sometimes, the philosophical content or subtle mood of wisdom in a poem necessitate longer pauses for the rests compared to the situation where the same rests are used in a poem delivering metaphors of an impatient burning and romantic love. They are also bound to the subjective interpretation of performers and their inner sense of tempo, percussive rhythms, and interpretive personality. For instance *Ostad* Jalil Shahnaz, a legendary *tar* performer and improvisor, always had longer rests and less tempo in his phrasings. Yet, he brought balance to short and detached phrases through dense ornamented details and *vibratos* which made the listener digest every note's cohesion within a motif, and every motif's within a sentence. He meticulously made even the echo or reverb of each sound or ornament play a role in musical phrasing. This virtuosic characteristic, highly praised for its emotionality and *hal*, became part of his masterful individual style and even an identity *of Maktab Isfahan*[51] which he represented in all his works.

Thus, with the contrast and constant exchange of these temporal and accentual tensions in the flexible metric frames, it is not unusual to have the feeling of bright energy and happier moods from the fixed-metered *gusheh*s which are a minority in *radif* opposing to many free and stretchable *gushehs.* In the latter, the performer interprets *hal* in a fluid musical time, tension and affect with a sad, yet more subtle and meditative mood. More examples of

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[51] The characteristic of clear, and loosely phrased delivery of the words with no rush is also an identity of vocal *maktab* of Isfahan. In this *maktab* style, delivering the meaning and mood of the poem through highly selected melismas and meticulous articulation are of most priority.

using poetry and its rhythmic aspects in teaching radif will be described at the end of this chapter.

3. Emotional-Interpretative Connection

Throughout the history, it was not uncommon for the musicians and poets to possess a vast knowledge of each other's field. Khaleghi explains the specialty of one of the early teachers in Shiraz, Mirza Nasir Forsat who taught painting, *aruz* of Persian poetry and had a related book about the metric interrelationship between Persian music and poetry. In this book, titled *Bohur-o Alhan* (1914) in which he suggested verses of poetry matching thematically and structurally with the mood, space, and time of performing music. Khaleghi writes an introductory note to the later editions of the book where he highly recommends it by mentioning specific points,

> *Ostad's* [Forsat's] suggested *lahn* [mode, piece] for each *ghazal* is not to impose rigid frames, but he has considered the appropriateness of all aspects of the poem including the theme and meter to the point that by the end of the book, he has classified the poems based on being suitable for reciting in day or nighttime, indoors or outdoors such as gardens, green or desert scenery, etc. This actually derives from the ancient beliefs regarding the dedication of vocal and instrumental music to specific times of the day and night. They believed that different *maqams* and pieces were suitable for specific times of day or night. They also considered the listeners' temperaments (*mazaj*) for the performance and so on. In any case, I tried his suggested *ghazals* with other modes which matched as well. However, since *Ostad* [Forsat] had not insisted on the essentiality of these choices, I can say that this book is very useful for music learners, especially singers.
>
> (Khaleqi 2002, 155-157)

Khaleghi recommends this book, especially as a repertoire for the singers since they can use it as a reliable performing reference containing selected ghazals in various *bohur* and metric structures. He emphasizes that the sensitivity of making preference for the matching poetry and musical atmosphere is mostly maintained for *radif* and *avaz.* However, in

general sense, there are numerous possibilities for composing music based on a poetry provided that the meaning, content, and mood of the poem is preserved. It is not far from reality to say that the two factors of consideration for the mood of the session and listeners (i.e., time, occasion, and place) as well as the perception of the poetry in their music have been frequently focused by the trainers, musicians, philosophers within the aesthetic frame. While these choices could be very individual based, they were seen with the requirement for serious training and understanding of the structural balance.

Another important point is how much the lyrics and poetry implant their emotional mood or philosophical scope in music and how they direct the composer and the performer in expression of the piece. Based on the vocal centrality of Persian music, many of the philosophical and emotional elements of poetry and their ethical content are interwoven with *gushehs*. Some of the poetic forms indeed have developed into musical forms and *gusheshs* among which are *masnavi, saqi nameh,* and *dobeyti,* each of them associated with a certain genre of topics, meanings, and mood. In this sense, the meaning, aesthetics, and emotional content of poetry direct the performer to the expression and interpretation of music. The following example is from *gusheh Gham-angiz* in *dastgah Dashti* from Saba's *radif* for *santur*. The lyrics are based on two stanzas by Sa'di.

<div dir="rtl">

چنان سوزم که خامانم نبینند

نداند تندرست احوال محموم

</div>

The way I am in suz (burning), no raw (fresh) one would ever know
The way I am in fever (burning), no lusty one would ever know
(Sa'di, translated by the author)

In this *gusheh* (*Figure 12*), the words for *suz* and the painful complaint are at the beginning on the long *D* (*Re*) notes that dissolve into descending melismatic motives. The ornamentations and *vibratos* are placed to complete the emotional effect of the meaning arranged on music. Also, based on the emotional content of the poetry, all the long phrases are fading out in descending melodic movements. This melodic pattern is intensified by the fact that all the dynamic ranges should fade away at the end of each line and that the highest note is *D* (also tonic of *Dashti*) upon which the melodic line start to slip downward. This repeating melodic and dynamic structure combined with the lyrics intensify the melancholic mood of the *gusheh*.

Figure 12. Gham-angiz in dastgah Dashti from Saba's radif for santur

In my interview with a young and successful vocalist and a student of *Ostad* Shajarian (the great singer), I ask him whether he chooses poems based on the mood of the *dastgah* in which he intends to perform or vice versa. To my enthusiasm, he mentions that as a singer he usually looks at the poetry and the poem in his mind connects to the sound, mood, or affect associated with a certain *dastgah* or *gusheh*. The poem may even induce certain melodies and patterns as if it speaks musically. He explains,

> It is true that sometimes I may have the mood of a certain *dastgah* or *gusheh* at the back of my mind and it helps with finding a poem matching that mood. However, it is the emotion and musicality of *the poem* that directs me through the musical interpretation. For instance, many of *Ostad* Taherzadeh's performances of *avaz* start with a verse which is not the opening line of a ghazal while it matches perfectly the mood and structure of the *gusheh* in which he sings it. This shows that for him too, the poem indicates what *gusheh* and what emotion should carry the poetic meaning and affect.
>
> (Personal interviews, 2023)

In a follow up question, I ask him whether after long-term familiarity and countless repetitions of poems he—as a Persian-speaker—finds them as cliché or too similar and monotone in musicality and meaning. His *zowq* and method of active re-creation impresses me as he mentions,

> For me the matter is *living* with the poem, and it takes me to some variety in music. Sometimes, a poem gives me a certain mood and musical material for a while; I may assume that I have found it. I continue living with it and working on it. My mood changes or it may be the poem's mood that changes for me or with me. I may move into other *dastgahs* and still keep reconstructing that poem. Finally, I find the mood, *dastgah*, or *gusheh* which is the perfect *interpretative home* for it. At this point, the poem sits beautifully and peacefully in that musical home I built for it. For me, the poem is always the navigator. Only when I am required to sing in a certain *dastgah* for a concert or performance with other musicians, do I search for a poem that matches that *dastgah*.
>
> (Personal interviews, 2023)

I ask him if he may possibly find more than one musical mood and interpretation for a single poem to put into practice, and he explains with an interesting example:

> Yes, it may happen. I sometimes even make deliberate efforts to do so. Sometimes your personal mood and thoughts change, and you see a poem differently, because of the subjectivity of the matter. Sometimes you can embed the mood within the poem, and it would respond well in terms of both meaning and emotion. For instance, if I am working on a line about the seasonal or new year's celebration, it probably inspires the bright mood of a *dastgah*. Now if I can develop it skillfully in a darker or sorrowful *gusheh* or *dastgah*, it can be interpreted as my nostalgia or loss. It sounds as if I wistfully remember the memory of that celebration or something about it that I no longer have.
>
> (personal interviews, 2023)

This floating interpretation and exploration of the mood and expression may connect us once more to the imagery and multi-spatial layers in the spiral movements of the King Kayumars in the previously mentioned Persian painting. It can be inferred that many aspects of the Persian aesthetics and language leave the space open for various ways and angles of imagery and emotional experience. While the plurality may sound chaotic to the untrained or in early stages, it gives boundless freedom and opportunities to the professional performer for expression and interpretation.

Dastgah System and Musical Affect

My teacher, *Ostad* Aliheidari gives me a few examples:

> When a performer plays *dastgah* Dashti, they should express the *suz* of Dashti. I heard a wonderful Dashti performance by my *Ostad,* and I had to hold my tears. If playing Homayoun, the *huzn* better be *pukhteh* (well-cooked), not *kham* (raw). It should be aged and glorious. However, when you play *gusheh Bidad* in Homayoun— which is the *owj* (climax) of it, the music should cry out loud and be objective. *Bidad* should never be dull or tamed. It always carries rebellion and objection. And it's mostly performed in high range which makes it a perfect *gusheh* for *santur* solo and showing the advanced techniques. This *gusheh* breaks any subtle glory.

Ostad Aliheidari, described these moods regarding the *dastgahs* and their *gushehs* in his metaphoric ways during my early stages of learning *radif* and encountering various *dastgahs*. Such discussions would happen again later, on more specific points such as ornamentations and dynamics when I improved to more advanced levels. As many Iranian musicians whom I met, he had his own (individualized) interpretation for describing these moods and he was articulate about it. In addition to the rich interpretations he used, they also made sense expressing the logics of the *radif* structure. For instance, the word "*bidad*" (injustice) in Persian language, refers to someone who has been under cruel injustice, and has lost tolerance for the painful situation. The name of this *gusheh* and its sonic and modal position in *dastgah* Homayoun makes the interpretation even more intense. Thus, if a student played *Bidad* correctly, but without the proper expression and intensity which was expected, Ostad, of course, wouldn't discourage the student, knowing that they still need to work more on the maturity of the expression and *hal*. Instead, with a smile, he would say, "Good, you played a Bidad, but it was not *the Bidad*! It is still raw. Please take it again and see if you can cook it for me by the next time".

These emotional associations and the aesthetic framework that they create for the taste and artistry of the performer are maintained in all *dastgahs* and parts of *radif*. Without expressing them properly, even if every single note and detail is performed correctly, the performance is considered raw. It would be interpreted as tasteless, robotic, or with no soul. Conversely, doing too much with the emotionality and exaggerated moods is not favoured. I ask a former student of *Ostad* Shajarian, about how much emotional expression

is enough in singing. He gives me an example of a young singer who is known for singing "too romantically", as he puts it into words. He means as if putting too much exaggerated emotions into the artistry that it ruins the aesthetic affect. He continues, "When someone in the classroom asked *Ostad* Shajarian about how he thought of that singer's style, he gently mentioned that it was overly romantic that would take away the aesthetic weight from his *avaz* (vocal art)" (personal interviews, 2023). A balanced sense of using variety and contrast is a delicate, yet crucial artistry in Persian music. Sometimes doing too little or too much may disturb the authenticity or take the tone of music somewhere undesired. Students always ask how they can really understand and develop the emotional aspect of a piece or *dastgah*, and the master's answer is always this: "by listening more and more; by feeling what you hear." That is why most *ostads* play the new lesson first before the students start working on it for the next session.

We have no clear evidence on how the concept of *dastgah* and its components became systematized in Iranian music although their usage in the form of *radif* refers to the Qajar era (Fakhreddini 2019, 36). The system of twelve *dastgah* (seven main *dastgahs* and five subdivisions) as of *radif* is a modern view, following the old twelve *maqam* system. There is neither precise description nor clear analysis on the structure and performance of *maqams* surviving from the past centuries. Nevertheless, there are records of a more similar classified system as of *dastgah,* known as *Khusravani* originated in the Pre-Islamic Sasanian period (A.D. 226-642). Under the support of the Sasanian court and rituals of the Zoroastrian belief, musicians (e.g., Barbod, Nakisa, Ramtin) had an exalted status for serving the royal art and worshiping matters. Barbod, the most celebrated poet-musicians at the Sasani court of Xusro II, is credited with the organization of a musical system

containing seven modal structures, known as the *Xusravānī* (Royal Modes), thirty

derivative *Lahn*[52](modes) and three hundred and sixty *Dastan* (melodies). The numbers

correspond with the number of days in a week, month, and year of Sasanian calendar;

however the implications are not clear (Farhat 2004, 3). The names of some of these modes

and melodies have appeared in the works of the Islamic era. Containing a variety of subject

categories, these titles suggest remarkable diversity of musical types and expression: The

examples are from the historic events and epic songs such as *Kīn-e Siavush* (the *Vengeance*

of Siavush—the prince) and *Taxt-e Ardeshir* (*the Throne of Ardeshir*) to glories of the court

such as *Haft Ganj* (*Seven Treasures*) to compositions of a descriptive and poetic nature such

as *Sabz Bahār* (the *Green Spring*) and *Māh abar Kuhān* (*Moon over the Mountains*) although

nothing is known regarding the theories on which they were based (Ibid.). Yet from the

dominance of nature, light, calendar time and the numerical logic of the Barbod's classified

alhan, it can be inferred that the core of these compositions was based on the time, mood,

and occasions of performance. Accordingly, the experience of listening connected Persian

people's collective memory and historical celebration with the musical affect. Farhad

Fakhreddini, a distinguished Iranian composer-conductor, educator and author concludes

that the musical performances in the court of Xusro Parviz, should have included a

particular organization and succession consisting of a *Xusravānī*, a *lahn* and a *dastan.* This

pragmatic and affective succession was also the music tradition of "*nowbat*" or "*nowba*"

during the Islamic period, consisting of four sections: *qawl, ghazal*, *taranah*, and *forudasht*

as the final culmination (Fakhreddini 2019, 31-4).

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[52] *Alhān* (plural), also known as the *Alhān-e Barbodi*

The relationship between the musical affect and the time and mood of performance also made its way to the treatises on Philosophy and *'erfan* during Islamic era (e.g., Kendi, Farabi, Keikavus' *Qabus-nameh*). The most notable view on this matter is "*Uqāt-i Taqannī*" (times of musicking) especially by Farabi (Azarnoosh 2011) which on the one hand relates to the cosmological and scientific features of "time" and day-night circulation and on the other hand interlinks with the philosophy of *hal,* and human's mystic presence within the moment. "Based on this traditional knowledge, every mode or tune in particular is suitable to a specific time of day. The timeline starts from before dawn to hours past midnight" (Azadehfar 2014, 12). In his study on the philosophical and theosophical views toward music and its impact on Iranian youth, ethnomusicologist Mohammad Azadehfar (Ibid. 12-13) questions the current acceptability of this view in music students' opinion in contemporary Iran. The research outcome shows that the Iranian young musicians and music students believe in the necessity of *Uqāt-i Taghannī* although they disapprove a very detailed categorization and encourage new updates based on the current appetite of listeners.

Based on its history in both Pre-Islamic and Islamic eras, the gradual development of an expressive mood and aesthetic sense of affect in presenting *dastgah* system is still a principle of the repertoire arrangement in Persian classical music. It is crucial for the performer to maintain the logic built-up curve of expressive and sonic intensity: Beginning from the plain introductory, ascending to an intense climatic point and finalizing with a descending point of relief, usually known as *forud* (landing, coda). As a repertoire of performance, this *affect spectrum* is approached modally, dynamically, technically, and emotionally, based on the succession of *gushehs* in each *dastgah*. Therefore, from the early

stages of learning *radif*, the process of training the repertoire based on the order of lessons and the listening practice is directed toward developing the student's sense of aesthetic in appreciation of dastgahs. A model of simple and condensed (contemporary) *dastgah* performance, exemplified on *dastgah Homayoun* is suggested in *Table 3.*

Table 3. List of a simple arranged program in Homayoun based on the logical and aesthetic development of the pieces according to the curve of mood in performance

Structure	Form	Meter	Type	Example
1. **Intro**	Pishdaramad	Fixed	Instrumental	*Pishdaramad Homayoun*
2. **Avaz OR Gusheh**	a) Daramad (Intro)	Non-Fixed	Optional	*Daramad Homayoun*
	b) Ascending Gusheh			*Chakavak*
	c) Owj (Climax)			*Bidad*
	d) Modulation (Optional)			*Oshaq*
	e) Descending Gusheh/Coda			*Bakhtiari/Shushtari/Tarz*
	f) Forud (Landing, Return)			*Forud Homayoun*
3. **Conclusion**	Tasnif	Fixed	Vocal	*Tasnif "Baq Tafarroj"*
	Reng		Instrumental	*Reng Homayoun*

The example demonstrates the basic arrangement with variety of options and possibilities. Based on the *dastgah's* structural domain and potentials, its sophistication, the length and medium of performance (solo or ensemble, vocal or instrumental). The performer also considers the poetry (if included), the audience's background (trained or amateur), and the mood or emotional context. Based on the technical potentials of the instrument, and the performer's interpretive and expressive skills, he decides about the arrangements and length of the pieces within a *dastgah*.

This is the aesthetic and affective frame for a classical representation based on the mood of the *gueshehs* and their modal range within a *dastgah.* There might be innovations or variety in terms of the forms and their connections. However, the progressive process of creating the mood and its sonic and emotional interpretation for the expression of *hal* is shaped and kept within the curve of succession—as rising and falling musical tension. The modal system of Persian music and its melody centrism often assisted by many repetitive melody types and identical motifs along with metric fluidity moderates the lyrical and expressive transition. If a *gusheh* contains poetry, accompanying verses are arranged in a similar pattern to increase intensity by meaning and emotion. Therefore, the progressions flowing into the sound, dynamics, and affect coincide in moderation which sound as "balanced" to the trained *zowq* and ear. Disturbing this moderation falls outside the trained aesthetic authenticity and enriched healthy affect.

In addition to the progressive structure of pieces within a *dastgah*, the potentials of various *dastgahs* in terms of the mood, affect, and emotional aesthetics should be considered. Each *dastgah* offers a different mood and emotional context. It is common that most of these *dastgahs* are attributed to introverted, melancholic and philosophical moods. However, it should not be overlooked that for a performer or trained listener, the "melancholy" or "philosophical" sentiment in dastgahs has a range. It consists of a spectrum which is perceived distinctly in each dastgah. For instance, I have heard and perceived by experience that the gloomy mood in dastgah Homayoun is completely different from Dashti, or Nava. Some musicians prefer not to label or describe these emotions to avoid simplification. However, their benefit in teaching and analysing—with the knowledge that these descriptions are highly subjective—is far from question.

In his book on the Iranian music theory and structure, Iranian historian and composer

Khaleqi attributes a metaphoric description to the mood of each *dastgah*. While these

attributions are highly subjective and may be interpreted differently by various musicians

and listeners of *dastgah* music, it is noteworthy that Khaleqi portrays a variety of sorrow

and gloomy moods to various dastgahs. He relates *dastgah* Dashti to "intimate simplicity as

of nature and folk life", mentioning, "Dashti is so sorrowful and affective that feels the

listener's eyes with tears of regret as our ancestors had to feel during the tragic times of

history [...] It reminds the lover who stares at the beloved with pure and tearful eyes"

(Khaleqi 1962, 169). However, regarding *dastgah* Shur which is the most elaborative of all

dastgahs in *radif*, he brings a comparison,

> *Dastgah* Shur is very popular and attractive to most Iranians. It is mesmerizing and reflects an internal sadness, albeit with patience and forbearance, in self-contentment. *Dastgah* Shur empathizes with a listener and is perfect for expressing passionate love and kindness. However, Shur does not share painful outcries and bone-burning outburst of sorrow like Dashti does; instead, it is like a patient advisor who drenches the sorrow and teaches you to be patient with it.

(Khaleqi 1962, 147)

Figure 13. An illustrated designed cover for the album "Pardeh-ye Oshaq" (The stage of the lovers), (199?) composed and arranged for ensemble by Faramarz Payavr.

This differentiation although subjective, continues in other *dastgahs* as Khaleqi describes. A different example of the personal interpretation that relates to the musical structure is the album, "Pardeh-ye Oshaq" (The stage of the lovers) composed and performed in *dastgah Dashti*—interpreted as very sorrowful as of loss. The cover of the album (*Figure 13*) is themed by the tragic and impatient love of the young lovers (artist unknown). In *radif*, *Oshaq* (lovers) is also the climatic *gusheh* in *Dastgah Dashti*. All the mentioned characteristics have been symbolically imaged in the traditional graphic design including the stage of destiny or mystic power (the unknown curtain and hands), the love birds as young lovers wounded by love, and the eternal life of the lovers in the garden.

In a simplified explanation, *Ostad* Abolhassan Saba elaborates on the matter of sorrow and *huzn* in Persian music authenticity and the content of the classical repertoire as the following:

It is often said that Persian music is sad and should be replaced by joyful music. If we produce joyful music that is not rooted in Persian music, we cannot call it Persian. On the other hand, if sadness is the foundation of a certain music, how can you expect joyful, laughing [cheerful] melodies from it? Persian psyche has always been—and still is—melancholic. This melancholy pervades everything of ours, including our poetry and music. In other words, what we express, willy-nilly, is, in actual fact, the product of inner, heartfelt emanations. So, if we really want to have joyful music, we must first produce joy and elation within our hearts—but not artificially. If we succeed in this, our music, being the product of our inner emanations, will be made joyful.

(During et al. 1991, 217)

Like many performers and educator-musicians whom I interviewed, Saba focuses on the psychological and sociohistorical aspects of sadness in Iranian music. His emphasis on the "roots of Persian music" (Ibid) highlights the significance of the repertoire (in this case, *radif* and its subsequent elements) and its authenticity as the emotional framework of performance. Again, authenticity is defined according to the wider frame of musical framework rooted in the musician's professional beliefs. Without any direct reference to mysticism or Sufism, he contextualizes "melancholy" as an element of Persian sentiments and identity notable in poetry and music. Saba's notion about melancholy, Persian poetry, and "inner heartfelt emanations" describes the element of *huzn* and mystic sorrow as an omnipresent expression in Iranian artistry. However, he also views critically the historical experience and social status of the musical life—as a part of Iranian life—contributing to the poetic melancholy. In this way, Saba avoids definite opinions on either the mystic or historical reasons for melancholic expression. However he considers melancholy related to social psychology of Iranian identity. Some of my interlocutors emphasize on the social history of Iran by highlighting, "we have a tragic history full of bloodshed, wars and

misfortunes. Our music naturally should not be full of delight, because people reflect their life in their music" (personal interviews, 2023; 2016).

Music educator and scholar Dariush Safvat explains both the technical and emotional potential of *radif* in creation of *hal*:

> The *radīf* inspires genuine *hāl* (states of elation): every artist, in order to be able to play or to create, music experiences some sort of *hāl*. Some employ artificial means for creating *hāl*, but the *radīf* provides a genuine state of elation; it warms up the muscles as well as the brain. If you work [practice] the *radīf*, it will provide you with an inner as well as outer heat."
>
> (Lecture at Sorbonne, 1988; quoted in During et.al. 1991, 215)

Safvat defines *hal* as an essential aspect of *radif* performance while like Saba, he separates it from the artificial means (e.g., drug addiction or other influences) of creating mood or *hal*. He emphasizes the virtue of *radif*—albeit in oral format—as a way of concentrating on details and the sense of subtleties which are hidden within the body of *radif* and must be respected and grasped by the musician. According to Safvat, these details are incomprehensible for those who are not versed in this art.

Rhythm, Rest, and Musical Affect

Due to its melodic centrality and horizontal build-up, the complexity of the rests within elastic or free metered *radif* and transitional developments has a profound significance. I have experienced, as a student and later as a teacher, that developing an inner sense of the rests' measurement in a student's appreciation and sentimental control is one of the most challenging aspects of *radif* interpretation. The reasons lie in the fact that the rests define the melodies within the fluidity of musical timeline and their flexibility of interpretation makes the conventions of time values very unsteady and unmeasurable for the performer.

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The performer must develop an inner sense and intuition for the proximity as well as learning the technical factors that determine the rests' durations and accentual domain. These factors include where in a musical phrase, sentence, fragment, or sequence the rest is located. Is it a temporary pause between call-response phrases—which is interpreted as a short pause, or does it finalize a sentence or section—which should be prolonged.

The rest is also under the effect of what comes after, which might be a vocal segment, a new transition, a *foroud* (cadence), a new variation, or a melodic repetition in a different register. All these situations affect the multiple versions of interpretations of a rest or pause, such as an eighth rest in *radif* which already has a fluid capacity due to the absence of a fixed meter and time signature. The next level of sophistication appears when comparing various individual interpretations among professionals regarding their personal renditions, feelings, and aesthetic choice of the rests' duration.

 Additionally, due to the lack of harmony and counterpointed textures in Persian music, all the multi-dimensioning layers should be filled by the variety rests, dynamics, and ornamentations. Since most of the *radif* consists of non-fixed-metered pieces, the interpretation of the rest notes and silent spaces is very dynamic. Even in Iranian fixed-metered pieces, there is some flexibility in pulsation in favour of the dynamics of melody. emotional expression and accents are received highly to avoid *khushk* (dull and dry) and robotic performance. In a broader sense, this preference affects the flexibility of tempo and a mosaic mobility and suspense in the aesthetic highlights of time.

In my interviews with musicians, many of them emphasized the importance of keeping patience with the rests and pauses between musical sentences and fragments. They

mentioned this point as one of the main sources of advice by their *maktab*-masters. Some of

them even called this aspect the core of aesthetics in playing music, also mentioning, "The

beauty of interpretation and *hal* in Iranian music does not really come from the notes that

you play, but the rests and breathing time that you await in between them" (personal

interviews, 2023). Many of them regretted that this fundamental factor is falling short in

today's impatient life, performers, and listeners.

A young *tar* player who studied under the highly acclaimed master of *tar*, the late

Houshang Zarif (1938-2020), describes the aesthetic elements in performance as the

following:

> The real beauty is in restraining the tempo. There should be patience and tolerant
> mood without haste. In *Ostad* Zarif's performance, all the sentences shine through
> with patience and not even a single note is rushed. There are no slipping notes
> under his fingers and the time for vibratos and their echo is cherished. The sonority
> is highly important. He took high-tempo challenges with students for technique and
> sonority refinement and developing prompt memory since everything had to be
> memorized. However, the [high] tempo was not for *radif* interpretation or the final
> expressive performance. There is no ideal in high tempo and this was also evident in
> the performances by *Ostad* Shahnaz (the most distinguished *tar* virtuoso and
> improviser in Iranian music).
>
> (personal interviews, 2023)

A young qanun player who has collaborated with various international musicians, reflects

on Iranian music as follows: "Iranian music has a soporific and meditative nature.

Excluding the minority of upbeat metric pieces such as *chaharmezrabs* [53]which can be

played fast, high tempo ruins the beauty and delicacy of Iranian music" (personal

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[53] Instrumental fixed metered pieces in various *dastgahs* to demonstrate the techniques of virtuosity on a solo instrument. They are metrically live and vibrant often accompanied by *tombak* or a percussion and sometimes arranged for an ensemble.

conversation, 2023). In my training years with *Ostad* Aliheidari and *Ostad* Sabet, I observed they took tremendous patience correcting students' fast playing. It was their habit of showing by lowering their hand in a pulsive manner to give a hint on taking longer rests, pauses and less rushing within the musical phrases. Gradually, their own performance as models and their suggested time frames and rests in the classroom helped the students to develop their individual common sense of temporality and silence.

Ornamentations, Dynamics, and Individualized Interpretation of Affect

A notable factor regarding the interpretation of melody, dynamics and ornamentation in Iranian music is that the musical score is a rough sample of the repertoire. Music notation, and published transcription in particular, fails to input the details regarding the expression and interpretation. On the other hand, with the centrality of improvisation and importance of the individual rendition, the music notation and published *radif* are not meant to be a fixed or finalized repertoire. They are only the models that the students rely on for learning purposes to develop their own rendition. Coming from a history of oral tradition, notation also makes the preservation of compositions and *radif* renditions possible. However, as many musicians including my interviewees emphasized, the notation is only the overall figure of what is performed. It sounds dull and dry compared to what we should and do play. There are many ornamental, dynamic and detailed aspects that we cannot transcribe, and if we do, we need countless signs and complex systems for notation which also kill the freedom, innovation and individual expression which matter in this music. By experience, the students learn that the transcribed content is not the final rendition of a professional

performer which highlights the significance of imitating the master, listening to old masters' recordings, and finally, developing one's own interpretation.

There is variety in transcription formats and its preciseness by different composers and musicians who chose to publish their works rather than oral transmission. For instance, in the *maktab* of Vaziri and his descendants like Saba, and especially Payvar, meticulous notation is taken more seriously. They adapted a system based on the universal notation and adding specific qualities of Iranian music. By multiple revisions, they published their own repertoire and teaching method for the classroom. Thus the student had to learn the notes meticulously and memorize lessons exactly the same as written during the learning process. As mentioned by the old masters and historical resources, (Khaleqi 2002) after learning meticulously under a master, in the more advanced levels or for performance, they could start adding their own *zowq*, expression, and shape an individual rendition. However, masters of the oral tradition present their repertoire orally and the students should repeat and copy the *ostad's* rendition. In the view of Vaziri's followers, this style of teaching as it did in the past, makes the training repertoire susceptible to change, non-analytical view, and loss over the course of the time. For instance, the repertoire could suffer from a master's memory flaws due to age, or the shortcomings that might occur by lack of competency among his students after him. In a video-recorded session—apparently outside Iran, (199?), *Ostad* Payvar explains different methods of teaching music and their impact in education,

> Music training in general was a private setting. Not only the *santur*, but all Iranian instruments were taught *sineh* be *sineh* (orally). The *ostad* or the performer played it on his instrument and the student had to copy it on his. There were always spontaneous hardships involved.

Payvar adds,

> Some *ostads* had taught for such a long time that they had developed a fixed repertoire for teaching. Others didn't have a pedagogy, but they taught only what they had learned, and it was always with the risk of change or loss since by the next session, [in light of their improvisational skills] they might have partially forgotten what exactly they had taught their students. This could make the process [of learning] difficult. Later, with the efforts of the great *Ostad* Saba, the material and *mezrab* principles of *santur* were organized, systematized, and published in notation. This material was subsequently used as a teaching source since then. I also continued what Saba did in the creation of a written and published *santur* repertoire.
>
> (private archive, 1990s)

Yet, both written and oral methods take a long process of imitating and self-cultivating by the students to appreciate and reflect the delicacy of ornamentations, the dynamics, and how and where to use them affectively. Under close training, the student develops an aesthetic appreciation of what to change or individualize them in a piece and how much of it would be enough. In my comparative description of the classroom teaching by a selected number of masters at the end of this chapter, I will show the variety of methods by which the aesthetics are taught in oral and written systems.

Regarding the dynamics, not every point is formulated in notation or practice. It is true that normally ascending phrases take crescendos, and the descending ones take decrescendos, and the melodic lines embed a certain dynamic stream in Iranian music. However, there are some conventional and non-conventional elements that are specific of Iranian music and should be learned by experience since they are not fixed. Through these elements and their quality, the performer can express the emotionality of the piece and to perform within the aesthetic frames.

The following example is an excerpt of *gusheh Hazin* from *dastgah Afshari*. Literally

meaning as sorrowful, *Hazin* is a mini-*gusheh* or *tikkeh*[54] (mini-section), played in most of

the *dastgahs*, often as a part of a main *gusheh* to add an emotional highlight.

Ethnomusicology Farhat calls it a "vagrant *gusheh*" which is based on a relatively stable

melodic pattern but with no modal independence (Farhat 2004, 111). As the title suggests,

Hazin induces a delicate element of sorrow to the performance and due to its identical

content and expression it is quickly recognizable to a trained ear. There are many Hazin

versions in the *radif* and they are played in different *dastgahs.* However, it is important that

the repetitive notes in the score are not played the same in term of rhythm, tempo, and

dynamics. These elements are floating in the pattern of the motives, and they are open to

the performer's interpretation. While there may be variety in the interpretation of the

musical elements in this *tikkeh*, there is an overall expression that is maintained by most of

the performers. Through my adapted transcription, I show an excerpt example of *Hazin*,

demonstrating both the way it is transcribed (*Figure 14*) and the way it should be

performed (*Figure 15*) by the performer to make the affect of *huzn*.

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[54] Also tekkes (Farhat 2004)

Figure 14. Hazin in Afshari from Payvar's elementary radif for santur, adapted transcription by the author (written)

Figure 15. Hazin in Afshari from Payvar's Elementary Radif for Santur, adapted transcription by the author (performed)

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As shown in *Figure 15*, from the repetitive eighth notes in the second motive, the tempo is broken in a gradual manner. Also, the dynamic falls gradually and there is a sequential alteration in the pitches (the register) between the two phrases that make the *gusheh* sound like a delicate game of light and shadow based on the decrease of the tempo (or the succession of short-to-long durations), the gradual decreasing of dynamics, and the lower pitches. This manner then happens in a series of shorter phrases (line 3) as a respond to the first part (line 1 & 2) while these short phrases are indeed playing call and response (light and dark) to each other. This miniaturist manner is maintained in various registers and through a more detailed dynamic range. The notation does not include these details exhaustively to give the performer more freedom and space for adding other embellishments. Performers' expressions may vary based on their understanding of *radif*, their level of competency, or personal choices.

One of the sophistications that students should learn in a classroom is mastering the ample ornamentation intertwined with the main notes as in Persian music, one can hardly ever find a plain note without some sort of embellishment or twist. Many aspects of dynamics regarding small motifs, phrases, lyrics, embellishments including melisma are to be considered in a musical system whose melodic and rhythmic features are often floating. Imperfection in one of these dimensions, may disturb the aesthetic balance of music and change the tone of articulation, style, and authenticity of the *radif* material. Thus, highest challenge for a learner is the technical and expressive skills of highlighting the dynamics without losing the main melody entangled with the embellishment.

Beyond the technicalities of playing hal, the dynamic interpretation also varies according to the performer's style and instrument. For instance in Payvar's dominant style of *santur*, the wooden *mezrabs* (sticks) are covered with soft *namad* (mallets similar to those of the piano) in order to control the percussive sound, vast echo, and to expand the dynamic range, while in the ancient styles, *santur* was played with bare wooden *mezrabs* without covering. While this style gave a crystal exquisite sound to *santur* as a zither instrument, it had to be played in low dynamics, lighter embellishments, and slow tempos to prevent too much echo and disturbance for the performer and listener. With his development of techniques, expanded dynamic range, and complex ornamentations and melodic passages, Payvar established a new sonority and dynamic potential for *santur*. This also elevated the potentials of *santur* from a mere isolated solo instrument to an ensemble and orchestra instrument with a higher virtuosic capacity that could be listened to for hours without listening fatigue. It also added more versatility and subtlety to the expression on *santur*. While the *mezrabs* in this style are made in lighter weight to allow more freedom for the performer, choosing the thickness of the mallets is the choice of the performer. The performing mechanics is mostly focused on the wrists rather than loosening fingers and it gives the performer more space to develop techniques and stability in creating dynamics, muscle force, and visual elegance. The performer is also free to use various pitch range and registers without concern for the chaotic disturbance of amplified reverbs.

According to my interviews with his students, *Ostad* Payvar never disapproved the beauty and originality of the bare wooden *mezrabs* and he reasoned with his students that if they could control the reverb and dynamics and keep a flawless tuning and controlled clarity on heavy-weighted *mezrabs*, they could make their choice of *mezrab*-style in their

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performances. However, for rehearsal or in the classroom and for his compositions, he settled the tradition of performing with *namad.* On using the bare wood *mezrab* style, he believed in the necessity of highly advanced and moderated control for aesthetic performance and extra patience by the audience. As a master, he had occasional performances or albums in the ancient style. However, the dynamic extension of the *namad* style is a technical, aesthetic, and dynamic characteristic of Payvar's individual style that became pervasive in Iran and changed the sonority, techniques, emotional expression and function of *santur* in the twentieth century.

Performance in Pedagogy: Examples

The following analysis represents some selected examples of the main techniques in teaching the aesthetic and expressive aspects of Persian music interpretation of the repertoire. In this chapter, I avoid exhaustive analysis of the whole *radif* material and the teaching methods. Instead, I try to bring examples of the training approach I have witnessed personally from my teachers or have obtained through my interviews with musicians and educators, advanced students, and also through my archival study. Some of these also refer to the pedagogical methods I built-up personally in my teaching experiences and experiments. As a result, these selected examples and case analysis are the outcome of musical analysis, field research, and autoethnography.

Maktab Payvar in which I focused most of my education and studies, is a completion of his master's *Maktab Saba*. In this *maktab*, the progressive and gradual development of aesthetics and emotional expression is clarified and taken seriously. At learning level, the correctness and preciseness of playing is the most important matter. After passing the

beginning level, the student finds differences in the *ostad's* rendition compared to the notation and becomes exposed to improvisational skills. In the later reviews of the repertoire and student concerts, the student is permitted to try out their own delicate changes and ornamental specifics within the framework of the repertoire and receive *Ostad*'s feedback.

According to one of his students, *Ostad* Payvar's professional advice to his students in terms of developing embellished or improvisatory renditions and adding individual *zowq* was to look at the type of *radif* and composition they were playing. If the *radif* was structured in loose sentences and less ornate melodies with more space to add embellishments and personal musical flavour as of *Radif of Santur* by Saba, students were encouraged to add details and have their own interpretation after the learning process is done meticulously under *Ostad*'s supervision. Minor changes were allowed to be applied in *Maktab* Payvar's private monthly student concerts or in later performances and more advanced reviews in the classroom. However, for some other educational material such as the *Elementary Radif of Santur* by Payvar, there were not such spaces to add much ornamentation. The structure of this elementary radif is based on a precise design to teach the fundamental structure, important *gusheh* of ten (out of twelve) *dastgahs*, and the metric-rhythmic variety in both instrumental and vocal *gushehs*. This book is a meticulous methodology to prepare students' techniques and appreciation of the *radif* music (personal interviews 2023).

Regarding the development of personal rendition and playing *ehsasi*, *Ostad* Payvar's students informed me of various stages that comprised his pedagogy: Due to the complex

content, internal structure, and expressive nature of *radif, Ostad* believed that students are not able to start improvising right after the learning stage. First, students should be competent in delivering and expressing the precise radif material (both in memorizing the notes and accuracy of the musicality) through multiple reviews with *Ostad*. At the next level, they can begin the process of minor changing and adding their own taste if their sense of creativity is sufficiently developed. By receiving occasional feedback from *Ostad* and developing multiple possibilities, students can finally play it according to their own emotion. Regardless, in Payvar's classroom, *Ostad* barely gave direct comments on how to perform *hal*. He believed it should be the student's own appreciation and expression of the emotional aspects of the piece. Yet that sense and intuition should come from a solid and continuous education, listening, and practice. The student has to observe and imitate the teacher in order to understand the internal structure and aesthetics of emotional expression. The individual *zowq* and its maturity is also a determining tool. (Personal interviews, 2023)

I asked my interviewees whether playing *ehsasi* is of an intuitive talent or a skill for acquisition? All of them approved both as requirements for playing *ehsasi*. I then asked them if the great *ostads* had a way of distinguishing the student's individual *zowq* while also training them in the attainable skills. One of Payvar's students explains:

> *Ostad* Payvar had directions for both. When he performed a new lesson, he was also observing implicitly if and how the student was paying attention to *Ostad's* touch of details, ornamentations, the *mezrab* moves, dynamic control, and emotional expression. He wouldn't say anything directly on how to perform a piece *ehsasi* or what emotion to put in each part, but he was paying attention to find out what the student was focusing on when taking a lesson. He based his expectations and

directions on that talent and *zowq* [55]engagement in which they invested their time and efforts.

(personal interviews, 2023)

As my interviewee clarifies,

> Not everything regarding the expression and emotion is embedded in the notation. The student should *feel* by himself and pays attention to the details of *Ostad's* work. Payvar believed the *radif* was only a method and a material to cultivate deep and individual expression and creation. Once the students developed these in a classroom, they should not play the same fixed material, but play their own improvisation and their own emotion. Thus, Payvar wouldn't give them direct instruction. [The model] was only his performance, and each student had a different appreciation of it. In Iranian music, playing *ehsasi* depends on the performer's *zowq* and *Ostad* Payvar gave his students freedom in having their own expression.
>
> (Personal interviews, 2023)

On the other hand, a young *santur* player trained with Payvar's distinguished students thinks of this hierarchical method of development as a partial fixed frame that may direct the students so meticulously that they never dare to step outside of the frames and build up an individual version and expression (personal interviews 2023). This notion agrees with a number of musicians who believe in playing multiple styles and *maktabs* in order to reach to a personal interpretation. Another interlocutor explains this to me in metaphoric sense, "Students should be like honeybees. They sit on countless flowers of different gardens to make their own honey" (personal interview, 2016)

On the contrary, my teacher, *Ostad* Sabet advised students to play each prominent style or *maktab* within its specific aesthetics, technical and emotional expression. For instance, the *santur* pieces by *Ostad* Parviz Meshkatian should be played in Meshkatian's style of *mezrab*

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[55] This is the same quality, "*khamireh*" (dough), that my teacher, *Ostad* Aliheidari mentioned to me early in my education.

techniques and expressions which are different than Payvar's works and style. If we play Meshkatian's works with the aesthetic expression and measures of Payvar's works, we have ruined the originality of both styles. Sabet emphasizes that we should listen to countless samples by masters' expression and embellishments and take their influence into our own *mezrab.* However, we should create our own version while their models are our indirect educational guideline.

In contrast, a *tar* player who worked with *Ostad* Houshang Zarif, mentions a different method by which *Ostad* directed students toward self-reliance in playing *ehsasi*. He explains that while the students had to perform exactly the notation during the learning process, after the elementary levels of radif, *Ostad* did not play the pieces before the student had worked on them and played them for *Ostad*. He asked them not to listen to recorded versions in advance. This way the student had to challenge themselves to perform and build up their own understanding and then they were exposed to *Ostad*'s model and accompaniment in the classroom (personal interview, 2023).

A *ney* player and teacher who studied music both in the (local) *maktab* of Isfahan and the formal academies emphasizes the importance of personal intuition in performing ehsasi as well as the psychological development for presenting it. He mentions how working on the physical and psychological comfort, meditation, and tension release in performing skills helped him, and later, his students, gain more capabilities and success to express the emotionality of musical pieces. This aspect is of high significance especially in *ney* performance, due to its challenges as a wood wind. In teaching the details of radif, he takes a combination of both methods. According to his students, *Ostad* performs each *gusheh* of

radif in advance, followed by student's repetition of sentence by sentence after *Ostad*. It is then the student's duty to prepare the *gusheh* for the next session and be corrected by the teacher when needed (Personal interviews, 2023).

As explained above, based on the teacher's individual style, their *maktab* preferences, and the potentials and necessities of the instrument, different *Ostads* take different approaches toward their students' individual cultivation of aesthetic expression and common sense of authenticity. For instance, the challenge of interval and pitch refinement in *ney* as a keyless bamboo flute benefit from phrasal repetition after *Ostad*. However, in teaching *santur*, the focus on internal understanding of the logics of complex *mezrab*-work, clear sonority, and solo expression of dynamics discourages the phrasal repetition. Also, the easy system of tuning, acoustics, and movable frets in *tar* allows easily adjusted accompaniment or duet performance for *Ostad* while in *santur*, a zither with 72 strings to tune and dense acoustic reverbs, *Ostad*'s simultaneous accompaniment is not preferable. It is also noteworthy that these examples are pedagogical models from the *maktabs* based on written music repertoire which is the most common method since the 20th century and focus of my ethnography.

Performance in Pedagogy: Comparative Study of Ostads' Classrooms

In this section, I present detailed descriptive and quoted dialogues and views that had happened in the *ostads*' classrooms in order to show various pedagogical approaches and methods by the highly acclaimed teacher-musicians. Most of these are video or audio recorded scenes from documentaries and private archives captured from the most prominent *maktab* masters of Persian music. The English translation, annotations and

analytical views are originally mine. Although these videos are in Persian language, I have

provided the access link for the samples which are discussed. The nature of these

descriptions and their themed relativity encourage me to move from a particular scene of a

master's classroom into that of another master for comparative, complimentary, and

analytical views. To present a well-engaged description and evocative imagination, I have

also chosen a deliberate freedom in the format of writing and paragraphs. I use quoting,

paragraphing, dialogues, and scene description sometimes as of a narrative novel, and

occasionally, as film scripts.

Ostad Ahmad Ebadi' Classroom: Music of *Hal*, not *Qal*[56]

In an example of a *maktab* session (video sample 1[57]), *Ostad* Ebadi, one of the most

prominent *setar* players and *radif* masters of Iranian music is working with a student. *Ostad*

is in his later years as a very slim and vulnerable senior man with a delicate voice. His

student is a young man who later becomes a *maktab* representative and *setar* instructor at

the university.

Setting: *Ostad* Ebadi's house

The traditional setting of the classroom is typical of an orally transmitted *maktab.* The

design and decoration of the room is usually simple. Pictures of the old masters of the

lineage and role model artists are hanging on the wall. There is a close space and intimacy

between the teacher and student although the relationship is formal.

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[56] Also *ghal* (in Perian)
[57] Video sample 1) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFzpVuyKDqc

Ebadi, Scene 1) A student politely sits in front of a teacher (like church manner) and follows up the instructions meticulously. They work on *dastgah* Dashti, a Persian mode known for its expression of sorrow (supposedly) in the mood of young romantic love.

As the student imitates *Ostad* note by note, he poses a question on an aesthetic detail in performance. I translate their dialogue in English below,

- "When I start *gusheh Oshaq* in the high register, should I pluck delicately by one finger or by all fingers with more intensity?"

Having foreseen the question, before letting him finish, *Ostad* replies,

- "As I've told you many times, it is the matter of *hal*. You should look and see into *your own hal of playing*'".

He then corrects the student,

> "In improvisation, you follow the *hal* of the moment. As I said, this [music] is the music of *hal*, not *qal* [referring to aggressive noisy and arrogant playing]. Nowadays, young performers ruin it by showing off with aggression. But this should be played in peace and subtlety. *It should warmly sit into your soul and cherish the heart.*

Also (in this documentary), in response to the *'erfani* aspect of *hal*, *Ostad* Ebadi clarifies that it "can be" *'erfani* which means that it is not the necessity but the possibility for the component of *hal*.

Ostad Hassan Kasaii's Classroom: Music as Poetry

Ostad Hassan Kasaii was the most prominent nay player and improvisor in Iran who studied under the great *Ostad* Saba. He was also a master of *setar* and a representer and educator of *Maktab Isfahan*. Originally from a wealthy merchant family in Isfahan, He had a very large and beautiful house in one of the best old neighbourhoods in Isfahan where he

lived most of his life and taught students as well as his own children. This video-recording is from his younger days in Isfahan.

Setting: *Ostad* Kasaii's classroom (video sample 2[58]) is also held privately in his home. The traditional setting, decorations and a large, framed portrait of the great *Ostad* Saba is visible in his spacious living room. The students sit quietly and politely with their ney instruments as a small group.

Kasaii, Scene 1) *Ostad* Kasaii starts singing the melody arranged on a line of poetry. He vocalizes the main melody and its focal embellishments as reading a lesson. He then asks one of the students to play *gusheh Daramad Zabul* in the same mode and atmosphere as the vocal line he already sang. This introductory singing is an important factor in setting up the mood of the *dastgah* and to direct the student in the aesthetic and emotional ground of *Dastgah Chargah* and *gusheh Zabul. Ostad* Kasai then starts playing the same music sentence and the student repeats after *ostad's* pause. *Ostad* continues by singing shorter phrases, asking the student to repeat. Then *Ostad* plays the melodic model on his *ney*; the same pattern repeats for the next verse of poetry which is also the next musical sentence in terms of melody, durations, and embellishments. After finishing and instrumental responding to the vocal part, the closing statement is practiced separately by dividing it into chunks as the student imitates after the master.

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[58] Video sample 2) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-JnL8tGcpU

The cycle of learning: *Ostad* deconstructs the sentences into short phrases, motives, and fragments by vocalizing; the student's repeats; *Ostad* picks it up again and performs on *ney*. This manner continues in a cycle of repeating, listening, correcting.

After working on the *gusheh*, *Ostad* gradually moves into a metric piece in the same atmosphere of *Zabol-Chahargah* and develops it into a well-known *tasnif* "*Che Khosh Seid-e Delam Kardi*" ("How pleasant you hunted my heart"). He plays it on his *ney*, and then starts singing the words on the same melody. When he stops after a section, the other student starts by responding on *ney*. As the student moves along, Kassai alarms him about losing the beat. Over the repetition practice, *Ostad* plays the music sentence on his *ney* and the student tries to add embellishments and refine them over the repetition. *Ostad* rotates his role between singing and playing *tasnif* to keep the model in repeat. Finishing the *tasnif, Ostad* closes it with a free metered sentence in a higher register which is a feature of his advanced artistry. Using these contrasts highlights the emotional impression of the performance. It is important to note that regardless of oral transmission, this method of teaching is fundamentally based on the structure of *tasnif* and *radif* in the format of vocal-instrumental call-response.

Pedagogical Styles: Analysis and Comparison

In these short examples, *Ostad* Hassan Kasaii teaches *radif* by singing an applicable analogical verse of classical poetry. The focus of both poetry and *ney* performance is on the vocal ornamentations. The students imitate the verse on their ney bit by bit and finally, *Ostad* plays the piece on his ney, masterfully, with refined ornamentation and virtuosic excellence. Kasaii uses a combination of instrumental techniques and vocal artistry of

Persian poetry in the transmission of *hal*. The mechanism that Kasaii focuses on through verbal deconstruction of the musical phrases lies in his consideration of two educational facts: first, the *ney*, as other wind or bowed instruments in Iranian music, is believed to be the closest medium to vocal music and its artistry; second, the analogical focus of Persian poetry and its directional role on emotion and meaning in Iranian music guides the instrumental interpretation. Therefore, the poetry and vocalization add structural guidance for the students. Paying attention to accompanying lyrics as important components of *radif* has been a highlight of Saba's pedagogy and publications which was maintained by many of his students including Kasaii and Payvar. As mentioned in the examples, Kasaii and Ebadi developed their individual styles, albeit orally, by concentrating on the imitation and individualized cultivation of poetics. Payvar on the other hand, published *radif* methods including accompanying poems for various educational levels to create a step-by-step educational path. His method had a major role in the advancement and enrichment of Saba's pedagogical method.

Hal, Technicality, and Sonority: Analysis and Comparison

Ebadi, Scene 2) Ebadi (video sample 3[59]) remembers an occasion when he is asked why the *hal* of his se*tar* playing is different than the other performers. He emphasizes on *hal* as a sonic quality of experience and individual identity by explaining his response,

> I told them there is no difference [in my *hal* compared to others] except the individual performer. I used to stand up to play *setar* when I was in the mood and before I had this pain in my knees. I used to play this way to give enough resonating space underneath the sound box of *setar*.

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[59] Video Sample. 3) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFzpVuyKDqc

He then demonstrates playing *setar* both in sitting and standing position as he experiments the sound, by continuing:

> When I play in sitting position with the *setar* in my lap, the sound is partially muted and controlled. But when I play in a standing position, the sound resonates and makes a better quality.

In this example, the performer defines *hal* in a distinct and physical meaning based on the techniques and mechanics of performance and sonic space while the individuality of the performer still dominates as a core.

Kasaii, Scene 2) *Ostad* Kasaii (video sample 4[60]) is associated with a more specific bodily innovation: in his style of playing known as the teeth-technique of *ney*, he emphasizes the dynamics and a crystal-clear sonority of the *ney* using the teeth and their spatial gaps. He prefers his innovated style rather than the old-style lips-technique to which he refers as "rough and unclear sound as a result of playing with lips". He is known as the founder of the teeth-technique of playing, marking his specific contribution to the aesthetics of sonority in the Persian *ney*. This style was widely accepted and followed by many *ney* players over the past decades and has added to the clarity and delicacy of sound in the aesthetics of *ney*. Kasaii emphasizes the importance of adjusting the absolute sound and tuning in the mind (brain) before attempting to provide it on *ney*. He also shows that the position and movement of the lips and tongue are the main device of perfect tuning rather than the physicality of the instrument. To accomplish these delicate perfections, Kasaii recommends attentive and focused listening, mastering the intervals in each *dastgah*, and working with a variety of *ney* instruments.

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[60] Video Sample. 4 (23:45) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-JnL8tGcpU

It has been stated by many masters that the sonic and emotional aesthetics of Iranian music performance is extensively impacted by the individual's *zowq,* taste, and advanced skills of the master-performer who establishes a *maktab* (of style and pedagogy) for that particular instrument. Thus the aesthetic frame becomes a heritage through the *maktab* lineage. However, in the case of ethnic or regional *maktabs* such as Kasaii's *Maktab Isfahan*, the local frames may have an important role in the formation of the aesthetic framework. for instance, in *Maktab* Isfahan, most of the focus is spent on the importance of the poetry and its proper delivery while in others such as *Maktab* Tehran, *tahrirs* (melisma) and embellishments may dominate. Other examples of the aesthetic structures based on the individual techniques, sonic experience and *zowq* was already mentioned especially in the case of *santur*'s *namad-mezrabs* in *Ostad* Faramarz Payvar's *maktab* and long standing *vibratos* in Jalil Shahnaz's virtuosic style of *tar*.

Kasaii, Scene 3) In teaching *setar*, Kasaii also practices the same method as of his *ney* teaching. He plays short fragments of melody including the embellishment, phrase by phrase, and the student repeats. He sometimes corrects the student by advising to play it "*narm*"(softly and smoothly) and changing the angle of the fingers. He then emphasizes,

> In this style of performing, we never want to dominate the strength nor to overpower the instrument; of course the strength is important, but we want it to be "*delneshin*" [to resonate well with the heart of the listener]. It should be emotionally impressive and expressive.

He continues,

> The foundation of performing and singing is to impress the listener's heart, "*be del benshinad*" (lit. to sit well in their hearts). For this reason, we can't play the same way all the time; that would be too much force and manifestation of physical power. We want it to have delicacy as well [he plays more gently, striking on one string instead of hitting many of them as before].

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In this manner, *Ostad* Kasaii introduces the sense of using contrast and finger touch in the application of physical pressure and controlling the force on the strings and the sonority of one string in contrast to a couple of strings. Kasaii adds,

> You see if I play all of them softly or strongly it doesn't have any '*lotf*' (delicacy, containing *zowq*). I also do the same with my *ney;* sometimes I play on lower and sometimes on higher registers. Sometimes I give it more rests and longer silence for the listener to be able to analyze it in their mind and review it. It's the "*halat*" (expression and emotional state, the state of *hal*) on the instrument and the silence or resting as well. It won't work if I play chaotically or be too subtle all the time.

After playing a short *zarbi* (fixed metered) piece, he continues,

- "Now let's recite a few poems by Hafez".

The Cycle of Learning: Once again, Kasaii emphasizes the poetry. He starts playing a *Daramad of Shahnaz* in *Dastgah Shour* and the student starts singing by *tahrir* while Kasaii accompanies on *setar*.

It is impressive that Kasaii teaches *ney*, *setar* and even *avaz* (traditional singing) based on his knowledge of *radif of Isfahan*[61] and his skills on both instrument that helps teaching singers. He uses techniques of *sual-o javab* (call and response) in his method of teaching. Kassai asks his student if he knows the origin of this special *tahrir* in *Maktab Isfahan*. The student mentions that it is the heritage of Seyed Rahim, a well-known local singer who was the master of the great vocalist-masters of *Maktab Isfahan*, Taj Isfahani, Taherzadeh, and Adib Khonsari. Kassai approves of this. [It seems that he asked the question to evaluate the

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[61] The *radif* repertoire and special features of artistry which is played and transmitted (often) orally by musicians and vocalists of *Maktab Isfahan.* It has some differences in the content and mostly in the performing artistry and aesthetics (e.g. the delivery of poetry and melisma, as mentioned before) compared to the classical (national) *radif* in Tehran.

student but also to be educational for the recording on camera]. Giving high credit and respect to previous *ostads*, Kasaii emphasizes that the *asil* (original) and correct was that of singing in Isfahan by Seyed Rahim, as far as he knows. He continues,

> I personally am somewhat prejudiced [impressed] about Isfahani singers who sing in the style of the local *maktab* of Isfahan. Each place must have its own locality. For instance, Bakhtiari [of Lur ethnicity] must perform their own songs and style; Isfahan, Shiraz, and other places should keep their own styles but not feed themselves on only one particular style which will make them similar and shallow (one-dimensional). Every place must have their own music and quality of music, especially Isfahan. Here [Isfahan], since the old times, the singers have had this well-refined mode of singing the poem first, and then adding the *tahrir* (melisma). This would allow the listener to understand the meaning of poetry.

In addition to the aesthetic point on the meaning of poetry, Kasaii (Video sample 5[62]) seems to be trying to express his criticism of the over-domination of *maktab Tehran* and the musical centrality of the capital in Persian artistry. This fact was influenced by the social context of modern Iran in the 20th century and the professional and state efforts to create a national artistic *maktab* (Tehran) in the center. The media (national radio and TV) and most of the learning resources and music schools were also centralized in Tehran. Although Kasaii studied music under Saba in Tehran, he began in Isfahan and remained as one of the distinguished representatives of *Maktab Isfahan* in his lifetime. It is worth mentioning that Saba himself was an enthusiast of folk and regional music and their unknown aesthetics to Tehrani musicians. His *radif* is enriched by numerous folklores or ethnically inspired tunes, themes, melodies, and rhythms which he composed or developed as a result of his travels and his unbiased interactions with regional artists who visited Tehran.

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[62] Video Sample.5, (37:15) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-JnL8tGcpU

As Kasaii continues on his *setar* by *javab-e avaz* (the art of instrumental response to the vocalist) to the vocalist student, he uses various registers of his instrument and switches between the density of the sound; single strokes after full strings, and timbre of the sounds based on contrasting musical modes. Proper, authentic, and affective responding to the singer's vocal *radif* and poetry is the prime of artistry and interpretation in Persian classical music

Ebadi, Scene 3) Back to Ebadi's training to his adult student who brings a detailed question on the aesthetic of dynamics, one of the complex characteristics of Iranian music:

- "Should I start *gusheh Daramad* [the intro piece of a *dastgah* in free meter] by striking a group of strings, or one single string on the low and high register?"

Listening to the student's playing, *Ostad* confirms the option of a single string, while he also encourages putting more intensity into the stroke. He emphasizes a *forte* sonic quality by hitting a lower register especially when starting the solo or improvisation in an orchestra or ensemble. As I have observed in many *ostads*' teachings, they have special tactics and performing advice for dynamic and sonority control based on the aesthetics of solo or ensemble performance. Since the acoustic nature of Persian instruments were historically designed for the indoor solo or the least crowded performances, the delicacy of touch and dynamic highlights and sequences have a tremendous impact on performing *hal.*

Ebadi then comforts the student who expresses being nervous when playing *forte* in front of the master. As mentioned here and in many of my interlocutors' recollections, an *ostad* is always observant to students' psychological moods. When necessary, he gives them emotional support, confidence, and helpful advice.

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As Ebadi shows more patience with the student's next question on the quality of picking and using the back of fingernail in lower registers, he clarifies the importance of hitting the strings of the same octave in a clear resonance without overwhelming the sound by the echo of other strings. Mentioning that he does not read music and does not care about the name of the notes, he emphasizes the sonic quality, dynamics, and technique manners of playing according to the situations of ensemble or solo performance. In this way, Ebadi develops the sensitivity and aesthetic understanding of the student regarding the performing contexts.

The formal and respectful master-disciple relationship and codes of behaviour are maintained thoroughly. Yet, Ebadi even at an old age, shares his patience and attention in answering the questions and comforting the student in detail matters.

Ebadi, Scene 4) When asked about the connection of *'erfan* to *setar* and Iranian art of music, Ebadi emphasizes that this goes back to a long history:

- "*Setar* is the instrument of *'erfan.* This [*setar*] is our ethnicity, our language, and our identity with roots way back and it's not a new thing".

He is asked,

- "Does this *'erfan* comes from the instrument or the content?"

Ebadi answers this question impatiently as if he finds it an obvious matter by referring to a collection of these elements: "These all give *halat* [state of feeling and being] to human and this is a considerable matter".

When asked to define *'erfani* music, Ebadi declines to give a definition by referring to the

'orafa (mystics) as those who should answer this question. He adds,

- "Those who are truly in the *halat or hal* of *'erfan* should talk about this. I am not in

  the position to talk about it, even though you may focus your questions upon this

  topic".

Regardless of Ebadi's approving of *'erfan* as an element of identity and transcendence in

Iranian music, he expresses a fundamental distinction between his self-conduct in (secular)

classical music and that of *'erfani* music as a genre. This topic is discussed more thoroughly

in Chapter 6.

Ostad Abolhassan Saba's classroom: A Master of Masters

Setting: *Ostad* Saba's home, a refuge in the heart of noisy Tehran.

During my visits of Saba's home—currently the Saba Museum—in the 2010s, I observed

the space of his modest house where he had his *maktab* for many of the greatest musicians

and *ostads* in Persian music (*Figure 16*). Saba's home is in the busy neighbourhood of

Baharestan in Old Tehran. The museum has many of Saba's instruments, handwritten

music assignments and manuscripts for students, his handmade artifacts, and musical

instruments as well as paintings, calligraphy, and photos at display. He is known as a

talented multi-instrumentalist musician and multi-craft artist. There is a small yard with a

very small pool and a few trees preserved almost similar, though not as lush, to what was

visible in the old photos of his house. Although the music classroom in the cellar is not open

to public, the old photos show the humble and simple but homey atmosphere of his

classroom, very similar to that of other discussed *maktabs* in *Ostads*' homes (*Figure 17*).

Many of his descendants kept his style of organizing a space for music classroom and practice, something familiar I had experienced in *Ostad* Aliheidari and *Ostad* Sabet's classrooms. Saba was also known to be very intimate to his students and some of the best ones had the privilege of being very close to the family, even after Saba's death. Due to the vastness of his work and teachings, I only focus on selected examples of his views and his students' views on his musicianship.

In the documentary "Abolhassan Saba" (Video Sample 6[63]) based on *Ostad* Abolhassan Saba's life and his influence on music, teaching, composition, and aesthetic expression, his renown students contribute important aspects of his legacy. I present some of their views here:

Saba, Scene 1) Safvat, Saba's students (mostly) of *setar* says,

> The style of ornamentations is more difficult than the notes (melody). The ornamentations don't work with notation, and it should be learned *sineh be sineh.* [He plays the simple plain form and then shows with the ornamentations.] These don't come in notation, and they are difficult while they may seem simple. The second point about Saba's style of performance is his preciseness, clarity, and clean sonority and musicality that Saba had in all the *gushehs*. Every single note and ornamentation is heard clearly and should be performed precisely. If they are missed or changed, the music is ruined. This preciseness is admirable.

> (Safvat in *Abolhassan Saba Documentary*, 1968)

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[63] Video Sample 6) link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_PcjfQhWiY

Figure 16. Ostad Saba's home and Museum, Tehran (2012) Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

Figure 17. Ostad Saba's home-class, Saba Museum, Tehran (2012). The staircase to the cellar classroom can be seen in the far left. Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

Saba, Scene 2) About Saba's research and studies as a teacher-musicians, Jahanbaglou says that Saba continued traveling to the most resorted villages and towns from south to north of Iran to collect the isolated and dispersed music *gushehs* (*Abolhassan Saba Documentary,* 1968). Ghobad-Zafar points out that when any folk-regional musician would come to Tehran, Saba would find them. He would invite them to his house and through musical interaction and sound and voice, he would transcribe their music and learn new things. Jahanbaglou adds, "through these efforts, Saba developed the *gusheh* of *Dashti* into a complete *avaz*, such as Gilaki" (*Abolhassan Saba Documentary,* 1968). Hossein Nassehi emphasizes that Saba used folk music in his compositions and included them in his radif. Many of these such as *lang* (additive) meters came from the folk and nomadic tribes of Iran (Ibid.).

With a highly curious and creative mind and a moderate worldview, Saba considered both

tradition and innovation with enthusiasm in his teachings. He was open to any scientific

and emotional inspiration in his compositions and improvisations. During his studies with

Vaziri, Iranian music was dismissed by the elitism of the European classical music in Iran.

In his later years, however, Iranian music was under the invasive influence of pop and

entertaining music. The social climate and vulnerability of Iranian classical music made him

firm in transmission of what he found authentic. He kept his classroom as a steady source

of education for the highest young talents and preserving an inclusive repertoire developed

from both the classical material and ethnic features of various regions of Iran.

Saba, Scene 3) Taghi Tafazzoli explains,

> Saba was always worried that some people say that Iranian music is *maghmum*[64]
> (full of *gham*, sorrowful) or *ghamnak* and *gham-angiz* (sad) and full of pain. Saba
> said "if they search and try to replace this music with a delightful happy music and
> God forbid that would not be rooted in Iranian music, this will tremendously
> damage our national music and the music that we will have would never be Iranian.

> (Tafazzoli in *Abolhassan Saba Documentary*, 1968)

Tafazzoli continues,

> Saba was very worried about the situation that we are eventually dealing with
> today. We see that some people have forgotten the national[65] and *asil* (authentic)
> music of Iran and what they [probably media and popular culture] present to our
> youth is anything but Iranian *asil* and national music.

> (Tafazzoli, Ibid.)

It seems that the point here is about Western pop music. We can assume that during his

time, Saba and his counterparts were defending Iranian music from a perception that it was

threatened by the Western genres. However, the decade after Saba (1960-70s), as I discuss

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[64] All the words, *maghmūm, ghamnāk, gham-angīz*, are adjectives from the same root "gham" (sorrow, sadness).
[65] "national" during this era and by these group of musicians referred to the *asil*, original, and authentic.

in my final chapters, there was a new generation of traditionalist musicians who took a more conservative approach than Saba's followers in their response to modernity and Westernization. Another threat that was felt during the later years of Saba's life was the concern for the non-Iranian elements of other Middle Eastern and neighbouring cultures that were influencing the Iranian-ness of the aesthetics, composition, embellishments, modes, and other aspects of performance. This influence was enhanced by their popularity on media, film industry, foreign orchestras, café music and other sponsored programs which were not the most suitable platforms for offering Persian classical music. This fact also alarmed Saba and the new generation of educators to focus on the Iranian identity and values of authenticity and aesthetics.

Saba, Scene 4) The last part of Saba's documentary examines the techniques and important issues of aesthetics and ornamentations which Saba preserved in Iranian music. The film gives credit to Saba for establishing the Iranian tone of aesthetics and identity as a protection from the interference of Arabic and Turkish elements and their different ways of ornamentations and aesthetics. There are good examples in the accuracy of this credit. For instance, it is recognizable to a trained ear and taste that by a slight change in the accents, timing and break points in Persian melisma and ornamentations, the phrase may sound as Turkish, Azeri, or Arab melisma and Iranian classical performers were sensitive and protective to these aesthetic elements. Thus the dominance of this aesthetic disturbance caused by foreign music and orchestras with whom many Iranian musicians collaborated, sounded like an invasion to the sonic, emotional, and aesthetic identity to Iranian musicians. Moreover, the publicity of Western pop music and Western classical music as a sign of middle-class elitism were additional concerns. Under these circumstances, the

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instability of organizational and pragmatic support for Iranian musical heritage under the modernist state of the First Pahlavi created a catalyst for revivalist movements' concerns for the disappearance of identity and musical authenticity during this era. Iranian musicians tried to make a space and a distinct secured position for the *asil* music. Also, a lot of their concern during this time was about the "new generation who never knows enough about the *asil* music" (*Abolhassan Saba Documentary*, 1968) and should be educated.

Classroom Ethics in Pedagogy: A New Family for Life

As mentioned in my interlocutors' interviews and my recollections of the *santur* classrooms, most *maktabs* had or still have ethical codes of behaviour to which both the students and master commit themselves. These customary behaviours become part of the learning environment as well as the professional listening and performing training. Some ethics are so solid and well-established that they construct part of the identity of a *maktab* while some originate from the individualized style and beliefs of a particular master or his heritage. However, most of them are common aspects of all *asil maktab*s. I share few examples as the following:

In a documentary, Ebadi's classroom during his teaching to a teenage student is shown characterised by focusing on these features: The domestic setting, the importance of remembering the past figures and masters by their photos on the wall, and the subtlety of the space are part of the familiar space in his music classroom. The student becomes a sincere seeker, awaiting with patience for the teacher to proceed and enter the classroom. The student pays respect by rising for *Ostad*, giving greetings, and mindfulness. He speaks softly and keeps patience before asking questions.

The student learns and practice modesty and paying respect to the master by waiting as long as needed for *ostad* to enter the room, rising in his honour, kissing his hand, and talking in soft and polite voice, pausing to think before talking or responding questions. In return, *Ostad* Ebadi also speaks gently and politely, shakes hand with the student warmly, encourages him and asks where their last *mashq* (assigned lesson) was. He explains every step to the beginner student and asks him to play step by step. He keeps patient when the student struggles remembering.

Likewise, in *Ostad* Aliheidari's classroom the first lesson to learn was that the students would rise for the master every time he enters the classroom unless during the performance. This was a remembrance of respect for the master and the elder as well as reminding the students of their humbleness and sincerity for learning art. He was the same as a student to his masters and I found this rule persistent in *Ostad* Sabet's *maktab* of Payvar. *Ostad* in return was very generous with his respect, help, and time even out of the classroom hours. The first time *Ostad* Aliheidari introduced me to his master, *Ostad* Sabet, who was visiting at his house, he accredited me with his full approval and trust by saying:

-   "*Ostad*, this is Miss. Nasim, and she is *our very own* daughter".

Even though I was a shy fifteen-year-old student at the time, my emotionality of that special proud moment of "becoming family" stayed with me ever since. The meeting was a very special day for me, sitting and talking intimately in the living room with my master and my master's master. After I did an audition for *Ostad* Sabet, we all sat for a tea together, and *Ostad* Aliheidari took a photo for me (*Figure 18*). The photo shows the tiny living room with

access to the classroom. The old homey view, old wallpapers and calligraphed decorations, antique furniture, and the lace curtains unified the theme of the old house and classroom.

Figure 18. First meeting with Ostad Sabet, at Ostad Aliheidari's home-class, Summer (2001). Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

Eight years after the first visit with *Ostad* Sabet, I am in my last semester of studying music with him to graduate with a B.A. in *santur* performance from the Art University of Tehran where he was a faculty member. Celebrating the anniversary of my eleventh year of *santur* performing (2009), I asked him for his word of wisdom as a guidance for my future life in *maktab*. Below, (*Figure 19*) is his insightful and touching signed note and my translation of it:
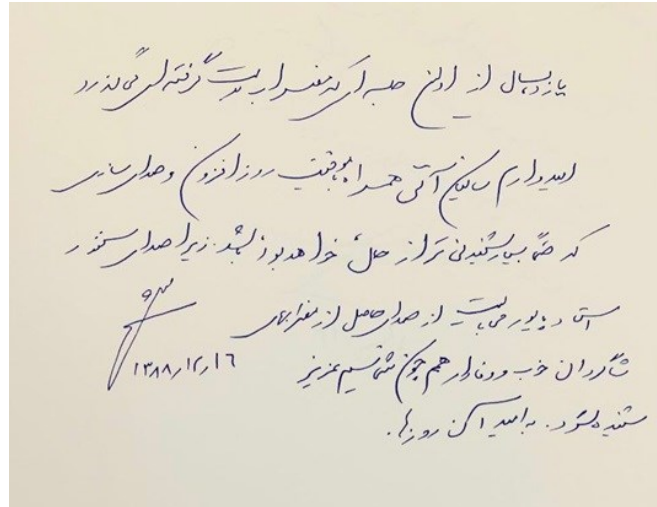
Figure 19. Ostad Sabet's handwritten note on my eleventh musical birthday. Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

> *Today marks the eleventh year since the first day you held santur mezrabs in your hands. I hope that the upcoming years will bring you continuous success and the santur artistry which will be definitely more delneshin than today. That is because the brilliance and beauty of Ostad Payvar's santur style and music should be echoed and remembered by the mezrabs of the most qualified and loyal students of his maktab like you, my dear Nasim.*

> *My hopes for that future.*

> *Saeed Sabet, March 2009*

From *Ostad* Payvar's classroom, one of his students mentions to me that during his classes with *Ostad* Payvar in the 1980s, as a young teenager his parents and *Ostad* started permitting him to come to the class on his own since the distance was walkable. Every session, a few minutes after finishing the class, *Ostad* would call the student's parents to make sure he arrived home safely. If he was late, *Ostad* would feel sickly worried. My interlocutor expresses with a voice carrying emotion and pride,

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> I was a kid, ignorant and not fully aware; and he was our *Ostad*, very busy with students until the late hours. Yet, he paid attention to every detail and checked on me with my parents every single time without my notice. He always cared about me and other students, even outside the classroom. He was a father to us all.

(Personal conversations, 2023)

Other students mentioned to me how *Ostad* Payvar included his students from other cities in the professional and pleasure activities whenever he travelled there for musical events (*Figure 20*). He recommended them for local positions and activities in music (e.g. teaching, professional events) of their cities and supported their artistic independence and feeling of responsibility. This behaviour not only made their musical-family bond tighter, but also prepared the students for engaging in the professional roles (personal interviews, 2023). Moreover, it gave all his students their own voice regardless of region and ethnicity and resolved the dominance of Tehran as the only centre for musical identity and cultural bloom.

Figure 20. Ostad Payvar and his student in Shazdeh Garden in Kerman, Iran (1995). Photo courtesy of Mehdi Siadat

From *Ostad* Houshang Zarif (*tar*) classroom, in an interview, one of his young students

explains to me about his highest respect for Zarif as a master and person:

> He was very calm, very respectful and a true gentleman, a role model whose all deeds and words were legacy are me. During the years that I travelled back and forth to Tehran to attend his class in his musical institute, he was always present an hour before the students. When students entered, he would rise in respect although he was higher by age and position of an *ostad*. In fact, he was teaching *us* how to respect other artists by his manners.

Recalling the memories with an intense emotional and respectful tone in his voice, he

continues:

> At the end of each class, especially knowing that we wouldn't meet for another month for our next class due to the long distance, I would voluntarily try to kiss his hand out of respect, but he always resisted in modesty. He always addressed his students by calling them, "*baba jan*" ("my dear child") [an endearing word by which fathers address their children], and he indeed was like a father to all of us. He never had tight schedules for students' attendance and the students never minded sitting in the classroom. Not only music, but everything he spoke or did was a lesson to learn. Even speaking about him now and remembering our memories makes me very emotional.

> (personal interviews, 2023)

From *Ostad* Aliheidari's classroom, I recall the first time I took my *santur* to the classroom.

It needed *Ostad's* touch on the tuning as I was not yet in the level of doing it by myself.

When my mother in her gesture of help, carried my *santur* due to its slightly heavy weight

for me as a thirteen-year-old, *Ostad* gave me a criticizing look. Then with a serious tone of

voice, he shared with me an unforgettable advice:

> Always remember that *you* are a musician, an artist, and you should fill this honourable position and its values to the best of your ability. You are responsible for everything related to your music. Please never let someone else carry your instrument or keep you from considering it as a *treasured* personal piece. Always carry it with pride and honour. Try to care about its safety and comfort more than those of your own. The instrument is a child, a baby, a responsibility to the performer. Remember that Iranian music has been always disgraced, dismissed, and disdained in our society, and as a musician you are responsible to present the respectable character of Persian music and musician. You are always in the spotlight, and the dignity of your music is that of your own.

> (Aliheidari, personal conversation, 1999)

Figure 21. Occasionally, intimate talks with Ostad Aliheidari after-class, if he was free. In this photo with my younger sister who was 7 and also a santur pupil. Photo by Nasim Ahmadian.

This advice came at the early weeks of my training with *Ostad* Aliheidari and both my family and I learned the important lesson. It was an inclusive and vast advice covering independence, self-respect, identity, responsibility, and caring (*Figure 21*). It came to me as a symbolic remembrance of the ethical and artistic values of a solid *maktab* that helped me in the following years of surviving as a professional female musician in Iran, a society with constant barriers for an active life in music. However, it took me a few years to understand the history and socio-cultural endurance behind the *maktab's* sensitivity over the respectability and honour of classical music in Iran. Chapter 5 will bring more focus to this matter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Genre, Class, and Female Agency in Aesthetics of Sorrow[66]

As I founded my all-women music ensemble in 2011 under Iranian state's restrictions on female musicians, my colleagues and I agreed upon defining ourselves within the "artistic" scope without falling into the "flashy" tagline of a marginalized "all-women group" (*goruh-e banuvan*). This choice was based on the awareness of at two controversial connotations regarding the concept of "women's music" in the professional domain of the early 21st century Iran: first, a woman as an inferior and less advanced performer, excluded from the serious musical scene, who occupied a place somewhere on the margins; and second, the exceptional woman daring to stand independently to perform her own music, yet often overshadowed or devoured by a social message or political atmosphere in resistance to the norms of a segregated society. Disregarding both, my focus was "the art by women as artists," but not music of a marginalized gender.

In this chapter, I discuss the socio-historical dimensions of genre, class and aesthetics in Iranian classical music and their impact on the formation of aesthetics, especially through the social position of the and female musician in Iran. I explore how choices and limitations

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[66] This Chapter is a part of a recent publication in an edited volume: Ahmadian, N. (2023). Female Agency, Genres and Aesthetics of Sorrow in Persian Classcal Music. In I. N. (ed), I. Nenic , & L. Cimardi, *Women's Leadership in Music: Modes, Legacies, Alliances* (pp. 225-238). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag

in the socio-political, religious and cultural context of Iran—historically and in the present—have shaped the aesthetics of sorrow as a distinctive element of a musical genre and social class. By presenting historical cases of female musicians' agency and sharing my autoethnographic experiences as a female ensemble leader, performer, and educator, I explore how women navigate the differentiation of genre and class within the art music of Iran, and how they develop their agency inside that system.

Duality in Genre, Elitism and Social Class for Iranian Music

The aesthetic dimension of Iranian classical music was shaped through various historical periods. Here, I focus on some important aspects that coincided with two dynamic changes during the Iranian modernization in early 20th century: first, the rise of musical elitism with an urge to draw a distinction between musicians as masters of the art music and the general *motreb* (entertainers) known as the lower class of the illiterate society; and second, the formalization of *maktab* to as an inclusive system of art education and ethics through dissemination of music as a "respectable" craft and crystalized national heritage.

Both these interdependent factors were outcomes of several socio-cultural changes in Iran connected to ideas about modernity, nationalism, and Westernization. The new experiences included a general advancement in the educational system, increasing awareness toward national identity and the collective past, the consideration of foreign relations and influence, and radical cultural changes such as *kashf-e hijab* (unveiling women) in 1936 under the Pahlavi regime. Not coincidentally, this period was also the beginning for music schools and publications, public concerts, new music bands, national radio and television, recording industry, and the emergence of bourgeoisie, especially in

the Iranian urban life. The pinnacle of these changes settled new contexts for defining aesthetics, identity, class, educational tradition and performing stage, as related to the arts. The result drew hard borderlines between the music of *motrebi*—a light joyful music of the uneducated—and classical music—the sophisticated art for the educated who are aware of Persian national heritage.

Although various regions and ethnicities in Iran have constantly added to the content and artistry of Iranian music repertoire, the bloom of modernized urban life and nationalism within the 20th century enhanced new cultural levels. An example is the social polarization of urban Iran, most notably in the spatial division of Tehran into the north and south portions of the city. As Breyley and Fatemi (2015, 1) emphasize, this distinction marked the north city or uptown (*bālā-shahr*) as the "modern" area, and the south city or downtown (*pāyīn-e shahr)* as the opposite, the domain of a traditional caste of musicians. The social status of *motrebs* was described in this way:

> The *motreb* [festive musicians] organized themselves under the direction of theatrical troupes with which they had previously been sporadically associated… In the eyes of many Tehran residents, the *motreb* is an illiterate, downtown [*pāyīn-e shahr*] musician. His manners are uncouth and he lacks respectability.
>
> (Ibid. 2015, 1)

Considering its historical and contextual layers of meaning, the term "traditional" in this division refers to illiteracy, "low" values, and cultural and moral "backwardness." It is noteworthy that the word "*motreb*" has been redefined in a fundamentally changed context throughout the history, as Breyley and Fatemi (Ibid.) explain:

> If the word *motreb* (derived from Arabic, literally "one who creates joy or generates pleasure") once referred to all categories of musicians without differentiation, today – more precisely, since the beginning of the twentieth century – it has become a

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derogatory term that is applied only to musicians who perform at weddings, parties and other festive events, to distinguish them from those who practice Iranian art music.

The modified definition of *motreb* and its attached subculture agrees with the historical references to the term – especially after the Safavids' officialization of Shi'ism in Iran during 16th-18th centuries. According to William Beeman (2007, 47-50), the secular musician in Shi'a Iran was marginalized socially and morally and was attributed as belonging mostly to the non-Muslim, ethnic or minority groups (e.g., Jewish, Iranian-Armenian) who could perform it in public without religious shame. This status contradicts with the religiously inflected use of the term praised in numerous medieval treatises and Persian Sufi poetry. Azadehfar (2014, 3-7) classifies the diversity of these views, in which many philosophers, scholars and Sufi poets (i.e., Rumi, Hafez, Sa'di, Roudaki) who were also accomplished musicians, praised music as the level of mystic practice, wisdom, and a connecting source between the dual celestial (heavenly) and terrestrial (earthly) worlds that built the core of Persian cosmology.

Although there is no clear evidence on when and how the meaning of *motreb* was recontextualized in reference to the light music of entertainment and festivity by the outcast, this frame seems to emerge with the formal establishment of musical education and dissemination of *maktab* pedagogy in Iran under the Qajar dynasty (1789-1925). This was also the time of stricter boundaries for the male musical domains (Fatemi 2005, 400). While many distinguished musicians were still at the royal court's service, during this period, classical music began to embrace a deliberate and resentful separation from *motrebi*, entertainment and trivial pleasure. The reluctance or escape of some royal-sponsored educated musicians such as Darvishkhan and Vaziri from the royal or

patronage's obligations to performing are the instances of art musicians' resistance to "joyful" musical service for the royalty and the tasteless crowd.

The class and educational gap between the art and entertaining genres and classified societies, for both men and women, becomes even more dominant during the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979). This era was also the epitome of artistic revival and institutionalization, modernization, intellectual awareness, and genre division in the musical scene of Iran. With the Pahlavi's valorization of an ancient Persian identity and cultural affluency, many classical musicians reflected these values to construct the basis of newly respected state music. They aspired to reflect the artistic and cultural values of the highest levels of educational and aesthetic canons as they had encountered in Europe. Persian classical music was to flourish in the same vein as Persian poetry, with its philosophical insights and technical grandeur; and so this vision typically refused the light pop genres. The new elite's efforts, therefore, materialized in practice and scholarship as compensation for many centuries of scarcity and denigration under the political and ethical authority of the Islamic state.

In his recent critiques on the overlooked case of *motrebi* culture in Iran and the popular entertaining music of the Middle East in general, Anthony Shay (2018, 11) argues that the contemporary scholarly attempts by Iranian and international intellectuals have unfairly rejected the importance of this tradition by consigning them to the "historical trash bin" and condemning them as "imitative, repetitive, diluted and sensual." Classical music, on the other hand, is seen to be "creative, original, sober, and [above all], spiritual." Shay attributes a part of the current public embarrassment of Iranian artistic society regarding

the *motrebi* music to the dissemination of art music discourse as a high culture, emphasized through the international scholarly works by Dariush Safvat and Jean During and their influence on music studies over the past decades. In her historic analysis of the cultural and political degradation of the heavily featured *shesh-o-hasht* (6/8) groove in Iranian pop music, Farzaneh Hemmasi (2020, 39-40) also mentions the "unmodern, debauched, and vulgar" associations of the *motreb*, a connotation from pre-revolutionary state radio and television. The music of this genre, as Nahid Siamdoust (2017, 42-45) explains, refers to café music and *kucheh-bazari* (songs of the streets and bazaar), offering a comical commentary on daily life. With their distinct style and performing space called *ruhowzi*—a social theatre performed in house courtyards—*motrebi* music offered a specific view of the public that was not always welcome (Ibid. 2017, 21).

Nevertheless, it is impossible to overlook the formation of art musical aesthetics as a doctrine based on its content, structure, interpretation, affect, and performing space compared to other genres, including *motrebi*. Classical music was seen in opposition to *motrebi* music, not only in the exalted repertoire and musical skills of the master, but also in the emotional demeanor of the audience. With its affiliation to the educated, mystic poetry, music schools and concert halls, the classical genre was an invitation for the audience to sit silently in a formal venue, listen deeply, concentrate on the weighty content of the poetry and even have some knowledge of the noble Persian art history. It was "the music by the elite and educated, for the elite and educated." The *motrebi* genre, on the other hand, was known as the music of weddings and happy ceremonies, street events and lighter moods played by "performing troops" who were often from the lower society and working-class. Although their music had various levels of sophistication from which

occasionally great musicians arose, the occupation was still connected to their low rank[67] often in service to the upper class. In her categorization of the relationship between musical performance and social values, Ellen Koskoff also mentions the social-sexual role and marginality of women in the "class-stratified socioeconomic system" in the court music context, especially in the Middle East and Asia (Koskoff 2014, 124). In Iran, the femininity and social inferiority were certain characteristics of the *motrebi* entertainment and at points, symbols of erotic pleasure and visibility as dancing and physical attraction were often left to women.

The Phenomenon of All-Women Ensembles in Iran

Since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the female voice and dance have been eliminated from the public stage. Today, while women are allowed to learn music, they are under official restrictions regarding performance and their visible activity in the public space – especially for a mixed audience. These barriers are even more intense in some provinces, due to local rules. Regardless of its dominance as one of the most historical and artistic cities in Iran, my hometown Isfahan has been long borne the scar of prohibition of women's stage-performance. The political rules centralized around religious authority have marginalized women's performance even further, limiting the playing of instrumental as well. Before I started my ensemble in 2011, my previous public performances as a *santur* player in Isfahan was more than a decade before. This was back to my conservatory graduation concert in 2004 and a music festival held annually in commemoration of the 1979 Islamic

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[67] There was a variety in the social rank, position, and performing stages of these minorities and public entertainers, however, they were often divided from the art music class.

Revolution in February. However, when I founded an ensemble in 2011, the oppression and conservatism of the post Green-movement[68] era of President Ahmadinejad had already terminated many musical events and normalized tight restrictions. In Tehran, the rules against women's performance were slightly milder, although extremely unstable, depending on daily policies, propaganda, and legalities by both political and religious authorities.

While the category of "all-women ensemble" was hardly a preferred opportunity, my colleagues and I considered forming such a group, as a result of a suggestion from my old-time conservatory master and the manager of an institution where I was teaching at the time. He was aware of our educational background in Isfahan Music Conservatory[69]. He also knew of our subsequent professional careers as performers and teachers – albeit with the regular limitations for women – in the conservatory and private institutions. As a supporter and mentor, my teacher was optimistic that the idea of an all-women group performing for all-women audience would at least open a window for representing women's artistry, while simultaneously adding more publicity and artistic resolutions to his institution and its inspiring leadership in the city. We found the potentials of this limiting, yet optimistic concept of "all-women ensemble" as a narrow possibility for our musical fulfilment, and yet it was the only one available. My years of teaching and leading Persian music ensemble courses in a girls' conservatory[70] and my young students'

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[68] This movement happened nationwide in protest to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency in 2009.

[69] Official music academies in secondary and high school levels that exist only in a few major cities of Iran.

[70] The post-revolutionary Iran (since 1979) obligates the gender-segregated education prior to the university level. This rule applies to music conservatories which are divided to boys' and girls' schools. The issue of teacher's same gender for each is still a point of conflict in provincial legislative systems as women are disallowed to teach in boys' school, however the lack of female teachers for some music courses makes the male employment in girls' schools

substantial achievements in school concerts made me optimistic about collaborating with colleagues. We wished to motivate our students, contribute to the city's gender[71] diversity, and pursue further horizons in professional performance. Women needed to experience and to be heard more independently – even if only by a female audience – in the male-dominated art music scene. Based on their competency, a selected number of young performers among my conservatory cohorts and other educated musicians were solicited to join the ensemble. I arranged a solid classical repertoire based on the *maktab* in which I was trained, with the aim of presenting a classical art performance, distinct from the common simplified or commercialized repertoire of many other groups. This was the beginning of my all-women *Nasim* Ensemble[72] (*Figure 22*) in Isfahan, Iran, that remained active and won several recognitions and awards from the most competitive Iranian international festivals until I left the country in 2016.

The recognition of my group as the only accepted ensemble from the province and the only female one admitted for competition among twelve selected classical ensembles nation-wide in the prominent annual *Fajr International Festival of Music* (Tehran) in 2013, brought some publicity. I received an interview from *Sharq Newspaper* to elaborate more on the status of female music in Isfahan. The interviewer quoted Mohammad Qotbi, a clergy member and then the head of Isfahan Culture and Guidance Administration, who (surprisingly) compared music bands to the national soccer team – where female

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unquestionable. This is a recurring matter of dispute – with less intensity in Tehran compared to other cities – between religious authorities and music directors.

[71] The concept of "gender" in Iran stills remains in the male and female categories as formally recognized frames.

[72] Also, "gorūh-e bānuvān-e Nasim". The state's official restriction on video-recording female music made the recording impossible. However, unofficial video samples and rehearsals can be found on "Nasim Ahmadian" YouTube channel.

performers must have (male) substitutes as if we were players in a soccer team. Qotbi stated, "this ban is an unwritten law that has been observed in the city for more than 10 years. Musical groups that perform in Isfahan must comply with the unwritten laws of his department and have a contingency plan to replace their female members" (Eng. Translation, *Radio Zamaneh* 2014). Insisting on the importance of Isfahan as a religious city, Qotbi's disapproval ruled locally, despite the official authorization from the Central Ministry of Culture in Tehran. *Sharq Newspaper* quoted, although briefly, my response to Qotbi as I emphasized the more issue of restricting women, with an equal degree of professionalism and talents, from the art scene: "the omission of female players [performers] in Isfahan has led to the deterioration of the music scene in the province. Women make up half of the active and creative population and they have been paralyzed" (Eng. Translation, *Iran Times International* 2014).

In such an imposing socio-political and prohibitive frame, the idea of beginning an independent female ensemble of educated young musicians distant from Tehran, not only in a marginalized social life, but also a male-dominated art was a question of critical aims and attitudes. A female ensemble was unparalleled in non-egalitarian musical arena, yet unavoidably, a form of social resistance and professional solidarity that could simultaneously overshadow its own artistic value. For this reason, my focus was on presenting the music *per se*, the aesthetics and authenticity of the classical genre, rather than bearing the prevailing gendered, political, or religious labels that had long imposed definitions to Iranian music and its morality.

Figure 22. Nasim Ensemble in a private concert for women in Isfahan (2013). Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

Female Music and the Social Aesthetics

In his ethnographic history[73] of Iranian contemporary music, Rouhollah Khaleqi, the music historian, composer and educator (Khaleqi Vol. I. 2002, 360), emphasizes the lack of published evidence on the female's role in the art music. Except for a few female musicians' names mentioned in the court memoire of *Tarikh-e Azodi* in the early Qajar era, women either decided, or it was decided for them to be excluded from the public attention. This

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[73] Originally published in 1954.

absence, either through self-isolation or imposed marginality in the art genre, was interlinked with the stigma of the courtesan, in previous performance contexts. It increased the stereotyped stratification of female agency with *motrebi,* even though among them were high talents as singers, dancers and percussionists. Khaleqi mentions Mohtaram Kalimi and Ghodsi, to name a few.

Emphasizing this professional fracture in female's learning process of classical music, Khaleqi (Vol. I. 2002, 363-7) highlights a gendered, yet delicate aesthetic evaluation of female vocalists in Iran by which they deviated from professional training of music, especially when receiving admiration from their male counterparts or dedicated fans. Due to their position as alienated practitioners of the classical genre, as well as to their physical and vocal charm, women were prevented from a presence on the serious stage of aesthetic refinement and artistry.

Khaleqi's analysis accurately describes vocal art in contemporary Iran, especially since the ban on female voice in post-revolutionary Iran. Women's vocal – and more broadly, instrumental – artistry is generally evaluated as exhibiting lower levels of competency. In vocal music, this is notable in women's tendency to not learn and apply sophisticated *tahrirs* (melisma) to their vocal parts, and as I will discuss later in this chapter, to not move beyond the structure of light *tasnif* and *taraneh* (metric love songs) pieces. Likewise, in instrumental music, women are less likely to be associated with advanced techniques, arrangements, improvisation, and depth of interpretation. This dichotomy has affected the aesthetic arena of female music in such a way that they are either over-encouraged by the non-expert feedback or dismissed for lack of substantial artistry by the experts' criticism.

The extremes are lower for formally educated women, especially the instrumentalists, due to their subtle self-projecting image, compared to the vocalist's central role.

We should note that the gender-stratification of music education has roots in a deeper texture of Iranian society in the 19th and 20th centuries. Khaleqi describes the social participation of Iranian women during the Qajar era as the following:

> In the streets[74], men and women had to follow separate pedways, even if they were a couple! Women were excluded from attending theatrical plays. The only two movie theaters in Tehran accepted men only. There were a small number of girls' schools and only a few families were able to send their daughters to public education. In general, the facilities for woman's education were scarce.
>
> (Khaleqi Vol. II. 2002, 195)

However, in the early 20th century, several fundamental and ideological changes occurred in the educational environment of music through the new attitudes by Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1887-1979), who is also known as the father of musical modernity in Iran. Vaziri was a former military colonel and a composer, virtuoso *tar* player, teacher and musical theorist who started the first formal music school of Iran, *madrasa-ye 'ali-e mousiqi* (Superior School of Music) in 1924, after completing his musical studies in Europe. He made enthusiastic efforts to include women in the educational environment (Farhat 2003). In the light of his moral and musical competency, Vaziri gained the state officials' permission to lead women-only art sessions for educated women of respected ethical reputation. Now considered as one of the first formal education venues for female artists, these music and painting courses were offered to a limited number of women during restricted hours with the least male attendance. The training resulted in the formation of a musical club and

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[74] Translated to English by the author

movie theater for women, and a number of concerts by these educated female performers under Vaziri. However, according to Khaleqi (2002, 196-7), the music program was soon terminated, due to the conflicts caused by unsupportive authorities and social hostility toward Vaziri's modern views.

The Legacy of Female Musicians

This awakening, yet turbulent era of music activism for women, despite socio-cultural and religious barriers, opened up new aesthetic and moral divisions. A small number of young musicians, who set up the artistic and ethical models for the contemporary and future generations, blossomed. One of the eminent legends is Qamar ol-Molouk Vaziri[75] (1905-1959), a highly respected classical female vocalist with a distinguished mezzo soprano voice, who began learning at an early age through attending female *rowzeh* sessions with her renowned *rowzeh-khan* (*rowzeh* singer) grandmother, Kheir al-Nessa. *Rowzeh-khani* is a form of narrative and melodic recitation in a lamenting voice for the tragedy of Shi'a martyrs of Karbala, which is performed at the religious gatherings. Similar to many well-known Iranian vocalists, Qamar began learning and performing *avaz* (Persian vocal art) through the religious ritual and mournful Shi'a gatherings, with a focus on the musical interpretation of sorrow.

In her remarks, Qamar emphasizes the role of these early trainings: in accompanying her vocalist grandmother, she learned ear training on the modal and tonal qualities of Iranian music through the Shi'a religious elegies, and gained the chance of performing in front of

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[75] Evidently, she changed her last name to "Vaziri" in homage to Vaziri's efforts. Her iconicity in Iranian music and social values of charity is often compared to that of Umm Kulthum in Egypt.

the *rowzeh* audience. These were the first steps towards become an esteemed Persian

vocalist (Khaleqi Vol. III. 2002, 139; Nakjavani 2008). Qamar is also known for the first

public appearance of an Iranian female vocalist without the obligatory Islamic veil (*hijab*)

in 1924 in Tehran's Grand Hotel. She began her professional music lessons with the great

master of *tar*, Morteza Neidavoud, who first accompanied her voice on *tar* in a private

gathering and advised her to develop her unique voice with a proper knowledge and skills

of the *radif* repertoire. The incident resulted in Qamar's completion of training with

Neidavoud, and her developing fame in concerts. She soon performed *avaz* and technically

elevated *tasnifs* on national radio and recorded with many distinguished musicians

including Abolhassan Saba (violin), Habib Sama'ee (*santur*), Hossein Yahaqi (violin), and

Neidavoud himself. Her refined interpretation of melancholy, deep lyrics and the vocal

artistry not only made her a primary icon of female musicianship, but also established

genuine models for acclaimed musicians and male vocalists of the following generations,

including Mohammad Reza Shajarian, the great vocalist master of *avaz* in Iran.

The following generation of female vocalists included several acclaimed artists such as

Roohangiz, Delkash, Marzieh, Moluk Zarrabi, Khatereh Parvaneh, Sima Bina, Afsaneh, and

Parisa. These women were also educated musicians[76] and high-calibre performers of the

art genre. They contributed to the establishment of female agency, not only through their

specialized competency in Persian classical music, but also their publicity with

distinguished orchestras and ensembles through then highly valued music programs of

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[76] Mostly under trainings of Vaziri and his musical descendants' *maktabs*

Iranian national radio and television. These valued recordings are continuously referred to as training models by contemporary musicians, including my ensemble.

The Impact of Maktab Aesthetics on Female Music

As mentioned, the division of class and social status intensified the differentiation of musical genres in Modern Iran, especially since the Pahlavi era. The aesthetics of sorrow in the classical repertoire, with its philosophical and mystic content, plays a role in this differentiation, where it primarily is the focus in *maktab* training. Accordingly, a deep classical performance is integrated with the understanding of Persian classical poetry, its themes and the rhetoric of mystic love and melancholy. By contrast, a *motrebi* performance based on light lyrics, festive moods, and less complexity reminds the music of entertainment and the less educated from the past.

Historically, the aesthetic frame focusing on the depth of melancholy and sorrow was rooted in both the philosophy and poetics of love and *'erfan* (mysticism) in Persian thought and literature, and in the turbulent emotional life and cultural memory of Iranians' battles and misfortunes over the centuries. However, in the *maktab* musical culture, this philosophical quality was given primacy, due to the historical depiction of music as an illegitimate craft or a disgraceful occupation, unapproved of by religion and moral values of the society. Thus, the *maktab* education and its framework not only provided a method of transmitting music as a secular art to the selected deserving pupils, but also created a respected cultural identity for independent musicians. Through this shared awareness, the art musicians in modern Iran focused their efforts on the establishment of *maktab* – and its aesthetic values – as a division or sanctuary for the art genre. In her survey of the

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integration between musical genres and current socio-political issues of post-revolutionary Iran, Ann Lucas (2006, 84) also highlights a more secure position in terms of the state's persecutions for Iranian classical music due to its "erudite reputation" that was "housed in conservatory-style facilities and integrated into governmental bureaucracy before the revolution". It resulted in a more "lenient regulation" of classical music compared to other genres. Ameneh Youssefzadeh (2000, 38-41) also brings examples of the new cultural policies by the Islamic Republic to legitimize traditional Iranian music under directives of "development of spiritual culture".

Nevertheless, it also deserves consideration that a long-term marginalization of women in public musical arena have faded out women's image of artistry and activism on the aesthetic arch of musicking—firstly within the context of general Islamic restrictions on music performance, then intensified by the elite male-dominated class of the Shi'a society, and finally through the extreme prohibitions by the Islamic Republic. This situation has increased the educated female musicians' strategy of pursuing the aesthetic values of melancholic expression and ethos of sorrow to connect to the "erudite" authenticity in the classical *maktab* repertoire and interpretation.

One example of this aesthetic division in *maktab* is the interpretation of classical *avazi*[77] repertoire, which requires years of intensive training and dedicated master-apprentice relationship. This repertoire is a collection of modal vocal and instrumental pieces with metric flexibility, interpretative elements, and abundant ornamentations in the *radif* repertoire. Performing *avaz* is sophisticated, interpretive, expressive, and it requires not

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[77] Lit., vocal (in Persian). A lot of its artistry derives from the vocal centrality of Persian music.

only a demanding understanding of Persian poetics and symbolic emotional components, but also an advanced level of musical techniques, dynamic expression and improvisation integrated with the memorized *radif* material. Additionally, the musician is required to represent the mood of the *dastgah* (mode), its *gusheh* (modal sections), and the phrasing dynamics as well as learning how to create, direct, and fulfil the mood of performance. This is merely a brief example of the aesthetic framework of *avazi* that differentiates its artistry and affect from the simple *tasnif* and *taraneh* music in the more popular (*mardomi*) and entertaining genres.

This is a potential reason for the artistic modern evolution of *tasnif* in terms of the content, message and artistry toward themes of freedom, justice, patriotism and social improvement, especially by the new wave of poets and songwriters such as Malek o-Shoara Bahar and Aref Qazvini. This change occurred in light of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) and categorized the new high calibre works under the title of "revolutionary *tasnif.*" Yet, the traditional *tasnif* was attached mostly to the entertaining mood, lyrical content and easy-reaching to the audience crowd.

Within the context of these boundaries, the framework of aesthetic interpretation is more identifiable for the female musicians who follow *maktab* training. Their level of artistry is a deliberate decision and effort to insulate themselves from the preconception and the past public image of an "entertainer", and find their place as respectable performer musicians and teachers in a male-dominated and historically marginalized art. Thus, the musical elements such as virtuosity, improvisation, interpretive complexities, emotional expression, and professional display, along with the choice of repertoire, poetry, body

movements and gendered presentation, form the evaluative approach for the authenticity of *maktab* aesthetics, including the ethos of sorrow.

Considering this perspective, the aim of my ensemble was to present classical music within the aesthetics and emotional scope of the *maktab*, though not transgressing the borders of gender stratification. While I was firm in maintaining the female identity, there was no intention for me to limit the content and quality of the music. My classical repertoire and *maktab*-calibre performance was maintained equally throughout our concerts with a female vocalist for female-only audience, as well as when performing in *Fajr Festival* with a male vocalist (due to restrictions on performing for the mixed audience). The performers' outfits and visual appearances were carefully chosen to be subtle and traditionally formal. The setting and arrangements for the audience demanded extensive attention to the artistry, silent listening, interpretive poetry and ethos of melancholy. Our focus on collective emotional cultivation and dynamic interpretation was frequently appreciated by the audience. The program contained a classical repertoire of successful works with reference to both male and female vocalists from the pre-revolutionary era of Iran, which had not been performed often after 1979.

Female Music and the Public Image: New Paradigms

After a strict shut down by the Islamic Republic, the gradual resumption of musical education for women in the post-revolutionary Iran, and fundamental changes under the new regime, has made women aware of the possibility of becoming a professional musician. They have enthusiastically pursued the credibility of classical aesthetics, like Qamar and other distinguished female musicians who took *maktab* or formal music school

education. They have entered the competitive male-dominated ground and when restricted

by law, they take the women-only opportunities. In a close study of the female-only musical

events in Iran, Wendy DeBano (2005, 455) highlights the symbiotic relationship between

music and gender roles in Iran:

> Arguments about the permissibility of music in Islam, the general social status of
> musicians, the important distinction between professional and amateur musicians,
> and the hierarchy of musical genres in a given context cannot be divorced from
> issues of gender.
>
> (DeBano 2005, 455)

In a broader context, the matter of gendered musical phenomena such as "women-only

ensembles" and "women-only concerts and festivals" have been debated as the alternative

methods by the political regime to "foster gender segregation" in Lucas's terms (Lucas

2006, 81) and open a controlled space for female activity through giving semi-free yet

Islamic identity to women empowerment in Iran. This semi-open space is subject to

multiple dimensions of criticism and controversies among both female and male musicians

and audiences.

Projecting on the case of female music in contemporary Iran, my observations and personal

engagement as a musician and ethnomusicologist confirm the existence of multi-layered

perspectives and priorities by women ensembles. The resistance to the primary concept of

"women's music as a division" is reflected in some groups' firm refusal of performing in

non-negotiated female-only events; while others, such as *Nasim* Ensemble*,* stood to

perform autonomously within the aesthetics of the art genre *(Figure 23*). For several

reasons, including publicity, other groups (e.g. *Mahbanoo*) moderate the aesthetic

challenge and female autonomy in favour of entertainment. These are among the facts

contributing to the rearrangement of the socio-cultural fabric for Iranian classical music and its emotional aesthetics not only for women musicians, but also for the gender-free domain of artistry at large.

Today, in the first half of 21st century, aesthetic paradigms of classical music are going through a major change under the dominance of social media. Women dress up and flash out their image, as well as their music and voice. They are still cautious—due to the sensitivity of restrictions regarding the head-covering for women's musical performance, as is required by Islamic Republic law. Many female ensembles (e.g., *Gillariss, Bahar-narenj*) now release their works exclusively on social media or perform on foreign satellite channels. Regardless of the length and level of their studies in *maktabs,* women publicize their education via sharing photos and selfies from the classroom settings by renowned masters such as Shajarian and Lotfi.

While they still stand on the margin of classical music in many ways, the new visual accessibility and competitive virtual publicity (e.g., number of followers, comments and music video clip circulations) rearrange the aesthetic criteria for female performers. In addition, women's access to music education and their arrival in various fields of music have encouraged male musicians and composers to work with women, especially in terms of vocalists, or all-women groups with a male leader. The goal is often to satisfy the prompt visual and sonic needs of the forever judging audience who quickly scroll down their social media pages to the next post, leaving prompt comments in attack or favour of women performers. The expression of female agency is shifting from aesthetics of sorrow and musical techniques toward the visibility of performance, space and self-portrayal. Whether

or not these changes lead to the formation of new aesthetic structures and performing

ethos in female musicianship will be a question for future research and observation.


Figure 23. The poster of Nasim Ensemble's concert (designed by Najmeh Moradi) with symbolic elements of Isfahan's historical architecture, calligraphy and Persian colorful birds. The note reads "For women only". The venue was a private music institution in Isfahan, 2012. Photo by Nasim Ahmadian

CHAPTER SIX

Dichotomic Pedagogies of Hal in the 20ᵗʰ Century Iran

The *maktab* genealogy and identity defines many aspects of the professional thoughts, practice, aesthetics and the ethics of performance and pedagogical process in Persian music history. Today the realm of classical music teaching is the result of two main methods stemming from the musical, social and cultural changes in the 20ᵗʰ century Iran. First, the group partially known as "*tajaddod-gara*" (modernist) emphasized *isalat* (authenticity) with efforts for establishing the national music of Iran based on the reconceptualization of the past traditions, especially between 1920s-1940s; A second group, known as "*sonnat-gara*" (traditionalist) emphasized *isalat* by focusing on returning to the pre-modern traditions with concerns about *gharb-zadegi* (intoxication by West) of Iranian music, mostly between 1960s-1980s. The latter's most important establishment was *The Center for Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Music* (often addressed as "the Center"). Both streams were revivalists in their own contexts, albeit in two distinct definitions, whose ideologies eventually resulted in ongoing conflict between modernity and tradition. However, due to the profound impact of these views on the foundation and formation of pedagogy, perception of the artistic life, and the aesthetic definitions including *hal*, it is necessary to study them more extensively, both in connection to each other and the social changes of the time.

This chapter investigates the social, historical, and musical frames of authenticity and change which led to the formation of pedagogical dichotomy in training the aesthetics of *hal* and affect in Iranian classical music since the early 20th century. I examine how the pedagogical and ideological dichotomy partially in contrast to the original Vaziri-Saba *maktab* heritage, led to the reconceptualization of *maktab* and refabrication of aesthetic education of *hal*. I track the relation of this dichotomy to the major changes influenced by modernity, orientalism, revivalism, and the socio-political reformation of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Authenticity and Modernity

The establishment and enrichment of classical *maktabs* by masters Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1886-1979) and Abolhassan Saba (1902-1957) happened at the height of modernization, national awareness of the cultural heritage, and cross-cultural relationships in the 20th century Iran. These *maktabs* pioneered the most predominant pedagogical system of Persian music which also coincided with the music dissemination. Before Vaziri, music education was merely based on the oral tradition, *sineh-be-sineh*, (chest-to-chest). Vaziri is responsible for the establishment and foundation of the first school for Iranian classical music, with a published repertoire and specified pedagogy (Khaleqi 2002). He was also the first Iranian musician who defined his *maktab* aesthetically, intellectually, and methodologically. Under Vaziri's teaching, two important icons were raised to construct the educational and aesthetic scene of Persian music: Ruhollah Khaleqi (1906-1965) and Abolhassan Saba (1902-1957). Khaleqi, an acclaimed composer, author, and later, the director of Vaziri's music school, also authored the first ethnographic history of Iranian

music as well as many textbooks and theoretical resources for the school. He was also actively involved in the publication of a methodic repertoire for teaching Iranian instruments in the school. For years, he conducted the famous *Golha* Orchestra for a successful program under the same title on national radio. He also developed a music appreciation program series called "*Saz-o Sokhan*" ("Music and Discussion"), on radio to educate the public as well as students on the aesthetics of *dastgah*, emotional taste, vocal and orchestral music. Both Khaleqi and Saba studied violin (Iranian style) under Vaziri. Saba was a multi-instrumentalist (mostly admired for violin and *setar*), the highest ranked student of Vaziri, and a highly successful educator with a private *maktab* of his own in teaching multiple instruments. Saba's methodological approach is known to be a moderated and more localized continuation of Vaziri's *maktab* which was later refined and flourished in his students' efforts, especially in *Maktab Payvar*. For the purpose of this research, I focus on the Vaziri-Saba *Maktab* as the core of the modernist-nationalist stream in order to have a comparative analysis with Safvat's traditionalist *maktab*.

Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1887-1979), An Icon for a Nation

Ali-Naqi Vaziri was a former military colonel and a composer, *tar* virtuoso, professor, and music theorist who founded the first formal school for Iranian music in 1924 after completing his musical studies in Europe. During the first decade of the 20th century, the rise of a socio-political movement, *The Constitutional Revolution of Iran* (1905-1911), pressed for the establishment of a constitutional democracy and the curtailment of the monarch's unlimited powers. It was the first of its kind in the Islamic world earlier than the revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 and led to the establishment of a parliament in Iran

(Amanat 1992, *Iranica*). Although distinguished with steady promotions, Vaziri openly sympathized with the cause of the revolution, which made his position in the armed forces rather precarious. The aftermath of World War I and the foreign intrusion in the country's affairs added to Vaziri's dissatisfaction with a career in the armed forces. In 1917, he resigned from the army, determined to devote his life to music. Yet, to the end of his life, he was known to his friends as the "Colonel" and kept his leading role in discipline and hard work.

Vaziri received his musical education in various instruments—most notably violin and *tar*—through serendipitous encounters with a number of musicians. Most of his friends and teachers including violin teacher Hosein Hangafarin, had studied in the music school led by French musicians working with the Iranian military, and had some knowledge of the theory of Western music and notation. In a short time, Vaziri became a multi-instrumentalist, literate in Western art music and Western harmony. Concurrent with his growing fascination with the theory of Western music, and Western musical instruments, Vaziri remained fascinated by the intricacies of Persian traditional music (Farhat 2003, *Iranica*). *Tar* was his favorite instrument on which he received instruction from Mirza Abdollah, one of the most acclaimed *radif* masters of *tar* and *setar* in the late Qajar period. Becoming familiar with the *radif* repertoire, Vaziri persuaded his *ostad* to allow him to transcribe the entire repertoire as was performed by the great master, in Western notation. (Kaleqi, vol. II 45-47). However, the new phenomenon of *radif* transcription and publication later became a point of conflict in educational approaches by the nationalists and traditionalists. These complexities will be discussed in the following pages.

Regardless of his erratic music education in Iran and his adult age, in 1914-1921, Vaziri continued his education of Western art music in France and Germany. He dedicated diligent efforts to learn music theory, performance, composition and pedagogy with extended focus on music performance to learn violin, piano, and voice. Associating with a group of intellectual Persians in Berlin, he also published his first article on the artistry and aesthetics in a Persian periodical as well as publishing his first training method for *tar*, *Dastur-e Tar* (*Method of Tar*) in 1922. This is known to be the first pedagogical method in Persian music and influenced his students and the next generation of musicians, especially Saba and Payvar to write pedagogical methods for their own instruments and classes.

Upon his arrival in Iran in 1923, Vaziri focused his efforts firmly to the advancement of Persian music composition and pedagogy with a view of the Western art music by establishing a private music school and devising a comprehensive curriculum covering both local and Western music courses in music theory and practice through notation. The establishment of Vaziri's school, *Madreseye 'ali-e mousiqi* (the supreme school of music) in 1924, largely modelled on the Western music conservatory, had a major influence on the professional, intellectual, and pedagogical scenes of Persian music which continues today. In addition to performing practice, Vaziri's efforts include numerous lectures and publications, founding ensembles and orchestras, and establishing courses in music theory and aesthetics. His influence was most importantly through the first generation of his prominent students such as Abolhassan Saba, Ruhollah Khaleqi, and Mousa Ma'roufi who developed their system of music education, aesthetics, and pedagogical approach for the Persian classical music as an art genre. Among these and many other students who became committed in the continuation and completion of Vaziri's *maktab*, Saba is the most

distinguished teacher for the authentic and private *maktab* that he founded and the highest and most prominent number of musicians, performer-composers, and music educators whom he trained during his short life.

Before discussing the most influential aspects of Saba's *maktab*, it is necessary to mention significant points regarding the influence of Vaziri's modernist iconicity on music education. Vaziri's efforts in publication of *radif* is sometimes criticized by the next generation of musicians or the traditionalists' view who stood opposing to the idea of publishing Iranian music in notation as a way of freezing or limiting *radif* to a fixed version rather than keeping its fluidity. It should be noted that Vaziri's first attempt for the publication of Mirza Abdollah's *radif* was more as a preserving method rather than a fixed repertoire. Additionally, the value of transcribed *radif* in analytical, creative, and pedagogical purposes is undeniable.

Through his new approach toward Persian music education in written format, Vaziri had a major role in establishing the methodology of musical education as an independent art, free from serving the religious, court or entertaining mediums (Khaleqi 2002). Prior to Vaziri's school, the radical focus of the Music Department of *Dar al-Fonun* School under Minbashian's leadership was "music education based on Western music" as "*'elmi"* (scientific) from which Persian classical music was excluded. However, the autonomy of Vaziri's newly established school with a focus on systematizing its educational program, proved the musical policy-making officials that Iranian music was also worthy of preservation, education, and methodology (Jafarzadeh 1991, 161). This was an act of resistance, to celebrate the authenticity, intellectuality, and cultural importance of Iranian

classical music and continued through his *maktab*-followers. In his lectures series, which was later published as a textbook, Vaziri raised and developed questions, definitions, and studies on aesthetics as (scientific) resources for *maktab*. He expanded the horizons of imagination and novelty for music composition, solo and group performance, and analysis with a view on the Persian history and original musical heritage. He was also the mentor of Abolhassan Saba, who continued Vaziri's system, albeit in a more local and traditional format of *maktab* rather than the conservatory system.

Abolhassan Saba (1902-1957): The Ostad of Many Ostads

Abolhassan Saba was a highly talented composer, multi-instrumentalist, and dedicated teacher who developed a successful pedagogical approach of his own based on Vaziri's focus on musical literacy and aesthetic education. He studied various instruments with some of the best masters of the time, including Mirza Abdollah (*setar*) and Darvish-khan (*tar*) and Esmaeil-Zadeh (*kamancheh*). By the time he entered Vaziri's *maktab*, Saba was already competent in several instruments and helped with the teaching in Vaziri's school. Vaziri was harshly criticized by both groups of traditionalists and radical modernists in Iran. Traditionalists such as Borumand, found Vaziri's efforts of *radif* publication, new theorizations, and formal education as a saturated Westernized dismissal of the traditional heritage. Radical modernists such as Minbashian and Parviz Mahmoud, on the other hand, opposed even to the existence of Iranian *radif,* its component and native instruments in the formal music schools. The latter group emphasized on the homogenization of Iranian music based on the Western scales, symphonic composition, and large orchestras, which were rapidly growing in many Middle Eastern societies.

Despite this dispute between modernity and tradition, Saba had a complete knowledge of Vaziri's resolutions as well as the historical risks involved in the oral transmission such as the master's death, fragile memories, and students' various learning abilities. Thus, by relying on his own individualized method outside of the formal conservatory system, he developed a successful, unique, and well-received *maktab*. Saba's *maktab* centralizes the modern idea of teaching based on a transcribed *radif* repertoire while depending on the traditions including the Persian aesthetics and poetic content of radif, close teacher-apprentice relationship and ethical dedication in transmission of the aesthetic understanding. Saba's method became the most influential and productive *maktab* in the history of Iranian music in terms of its solid pedagogy. It produced the most distinguished generation of Iranian performers, musicians and teachers, most notably Faramarz Payvar (*santur*), Ali Tajvidi (violin), Dariush Safvat (*setar* and *santur*), Homayoun Khorram (violin), Hassan Kasaii (*ney* and *setar*), Farhad Fakhroddini (violin, composition, and conducting), Qolam-Hossein Banan (voice), Parviz Yahaghi (violin), Rahmatollah Badiyi (violin), Habibollah Badiei (violin), and Hossein Tehrani (*tombak*).

It is worth mentioning here that the individualized *maktab* under the master's name is a concept resulting from the customary course of transmission in Iranian music. Throughout history, *maktab* was centralized around the artistry, pedagogy, and ethics of a teacher (*ostad*) who became a heritage in both human and artistic dimensions. Conversely, in the case of the Center, as I will discuss, the course of institutionalization made the organization (the Center) the core of *maktab* rather than an individual (*ostad*). While each of the invited masters might have their own style of oral transmission, they were serving under the goals of the Center and its framing pedagogy. In this sense, the Center's tradition of oral

transmission stood in opposition to an *ostad's* individualist pedagogy, which had been an *asil* element of *maktab* transmission in the past.

Saba's classroom was held as semi-formal sessions in his home. By accepting a selected population of highly talented and devoted pupils, he shared an artistic and intellectual, yet intimate lifestyle close to his pupils. Saba's pedagogy focused on the ideals of music reading, listening, and clarifying the aesthetics of performance. Contributing tremendously to the advanced interpretation of techniques and aesthetics of performance, Saba's published *radif*s are still significant resources of the educational repertoire. He developed many technical aspects of performance and arranged multiple levels of instruction both textually and orally in each of the instruments he taught. While Vaziri cared mostly about composition and was interested in fundamental changes in the theoretical system of Iranian music, Saba was open to the past traditions while keeping a critical view on the changes framed by his time and society. In his view, the notated system with misleading pedagogy could have negative impact on music education. He reflects his criticism of notated system when it takes over the role of an *ostad* as the following:

> In the past, any student who had *zowq* and talent for music would spend at least 10-15 years learning it. But today, music enthusiasts want to learn it in a few months and soon they become educators. Before the notated system, students had to practice a *gusheh* countless times to learn it, otherwise they wouldn't have a new lesson from the *ostad.* However, nowadays, depending on the published note, students sometime play a *dastgah* only for a couple of times and without an *ostad's* supervision. They pass it superficially [...]
>
> (Tavakkoli 2002, 75. Translated by the author)

Additionally, he developed a process of interpretation and deep aesthetic understanding of the semantic and emotional content of the repertoire through his rich arrangement of

classical poetry as the vocal part of his *radif* rendition. This learning process was highly influential in training of Iranian music composition, improvisation, emotional intertextuality, and technical skills of ornamentation. These aspects established *Maktab Saba* based on the culture of listening—as appreciation and imitation—and the artistic lineage—as the master-apprentice heritage—in a multi-level and flexible process without falling into the risks of the oral *maktab* tradition.

Authenticity and Traditionalism

Nearly a decade after Saba's death and continuation of his *maktab* by his musical descendants, in 1968, *The Center for Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Music* (the Center) was created, aiming for sustained effort to save the "fast-fading forms of traditional music". The Center was founded by Dr. Dariush Safvat—one of Saba's former students—and by the support of Reza Qotbi, then the Minister of Culture and director of national radio and television. The strong concern was over the gradual demise of traditional music in Iran.

Regardless of his training with Saba who had a moderate approach toward tradition and modernity, Safvat is known as one of the traditionalists whose efforts in the Center emphasized concerns upon the threat of Westernization. The outcome divided the ideology of transmission in *Maktab Saba*. By replacing the concepts of "classical" and "*asil*" (authentic) with "*sunnati*" (traditional), Safvat argued that no organization of this kind could achieve this aim without first creating the necessary ethical and philosophical atmosphere for the development and promotion of the traditional art. In a compiled introductory booklet of the Center (published in English) in 1977, ethnomusicologist Lloyd Miller who had worked with the center highlights some of Safvat's notions: "Iranian

traditional music is in dire danger of disappearing entirely unless something drastic is done to protect the last vestiges of the ancient art" (Miller[78]1977). Reflecting Safvat's views, Miller states, "Now that we have lost so much, we must work frantically, taking advantage of the few old masters who are still alive" (Safvat in Miller 1977). According to Safvat's belief, the European notation is useless in preserving the spirit and interpretation of Iranian music while the constant contact with the master is the prime preference for a complete comprehension of the tradition. Regardless of admitting the importance of all necessary methods of recording and transcribing for preservation, the new Center's motive was to prevent the encroachment of "undesirable elements of Western music upon Iranian music" (Ibid.) and this ideology was well-received and promoted by the Western intellectuals who had interest in Iranian music. Before analyzing this external influence on domestication of the Center's ideologies and its universal dissemination, it is important to note the course of its establishment, the institutions that made its foundation, and the individuals who shaped its identity especially Dariush Safvat and Noor-Ali Borumand.

Dariush Safvat (1928-2013) and Foundation of the Center

Dariush Safvat is known as a master of Iranian music, teacher and scholarly speaker. He started music from an early age by learning *setar* under his father, Ali-Asghar Safvat. Later, he received most of his education in *setar* and *santur* from Saba and Mohammad Irani Mojarad. However, Safvat believed that he received the highest influence in life and music from *Ostad* Elahi, a Persian judge, philosopher, theologian, and master musician. It might not have been coincidental that Safvat completed a B.A. degree in law from the University

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[78] Shared under the title "the Center"; there is no page numbers indicated in this booklet.

of Tehran in 1953; and a Ph.D. in International Law from the Faculty of Law of Paris in 1965. He also studied at the Institute of Musicology in Paris. Due to his efforts as a founding director of *The Center for Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Music,* Safvat is partly accredited with saving traditional music from obliteration in the 1970s.

Due to his studies and interest in the traditional[79] aspects of Iranian music, Safvat had ideas about revival of Iranian music from what he believed as the threat of Westernization. He presented many lectures and concerts, especially in various music collaboration with UNESCO, some influential congress and academic events in Europe, Iran, and worldwide which were well-received by the Western scholars and ethnomusicologists as well as congress members who discouraged the continuity of any influence from the Western music. Safvat attributed the emanations of modernity to Westernization, and as a threat to the authenticity of Iranian music. An example of this view was his criticism against playing Western instruments in Iranian orchestras and undivided teaching for Iranian and non-Iranian instruments. He was also critical to programming Western music theory courses without focus on the Iranian music theory [80]for the students of the music conservatories.

These insights basically contradicted the earlier efforts by Vaziri, Saba, Khaleqi and their followers who focused on establishing a scholastic content for Iranian music, orchestration,

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[79] My choice of the term "traditional" instead of "classical music" is deliberate and as a recognition of Safvat's opinion and preference for the concept. My professional preferred word for the genre is "classical" (because of the accuracy and clarity) rather than "traditional", "authentic", "national" although they are widely used in Iranian historical and current scholarship. However, here as a researcher, I purposefully choose "traditional" to present and reflect Safvat's views and locate them.

[80] It is noteworthy that prior to Vaziri, there was no current text on Persian music theory. Prior to that, there were some Medieval treatises (mostly in Arabic) by the Iranian Muslim scholar which were not common in teaching yet. Vaziri systematized the theory of Persian music, albeit with a concern for Western music theory which was the focus of the decisive authorities in Iran.

theory, and teaching method in order to branch out Persian music as an art genre

presentable nationally and internationally. One of the innovations as a result of modernity

was establishing a new style of *Iranian violin*[81] and piano techniques and aesthetics, which

added unique possibilities for presenting Iranian musical literature, emotions, and

improvisation. Although Safvat admitted the benefit of Western technicalities in the

modernization of Iranian music, he emphasized the diminishing consequences of this

exchange. Collaborating with his French colleague, Nelly Caron, Safvat soon published a

collection of his views in a French volume (1966) This soon attracted the attention of

Ghotbi who offered his full support and sponsorship for the establishment of the Center

under Safvat's direction.

Noor-Ali Borumand (1905-1977) and the Conservative Institutionalization

Being born in an artistic family, Borumand was one of the foremost authorities on the

performance and history of Persian classical music in the 20th century. He began learning

tar at the age of thirteen under the great master and family friend, Darvish-Khan.

Borumand was then sent to Germany to continue his education during which he focused

some efforts in learning Western classical music. His studies of medicine in Germany were

stopped by a sudden illness which caused the loss of his eyesight. After returning to Iran in

1935, he devoted himself to the study of music, mainly in *tar*, *setar* and *santur*. He worked

with prominent masters such as Musa Ma'rufi, Habib Soma'ee, and Esmeil Qahramani

whom he regarded as the most prominent master of the radif repertoire by the great Mirza

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[81] Same instrument, however, with a different style, techniques, microtones, and sonority preference.

Abdollah. He completed some techniques with Saba and Yusof Foroutan and the vocal *radif* with Hossein Taherzadeh. His accessibility to many distinguished musicians was one of the family assets which gave him a unique genealogical identity as a learner. His purpose was to learn the *radifs* of several masters, and to synthesize a version which was both authentic and personal. Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl, who also worked on Persian music with Borumand in the 1960s, describes his musical character as follows:

> Throughout his life Boroumand was unwilling to be known as a professional musician, maintaining that the most excellent masters of Persian classical music were amateurs and that their ability to make choices in all matters—whether to play, when, what, for how long, in what order, choices not open to musicians who were at the beck and call of patrons and employers—was essential to the proper maintenance of the tradition. He was an intensely private person, who was rarely willing to have his performances recorded or even heard by outsiders.
>
> (Nettl 1989, NŪR-ʿALĪ BORŪMAND in *Iranica*)

Nettl describes Borumand as an unusual figure among the musicians of the 20th century, Iran. Although he occasionally performed for close friends in small gatherings, he was considered (and considered himself) a scholar and teacher, whose principal contribution came from his thorough knowledge of the *radifs*. He came from a family who were wealthy, and fortunate to host private gatherings for musicians rather than public performances and this was his preference in his professional years. Borumand's ideologies and lifestyle derived from his special personal and family status. Nettl adds,

> [Borumand's] outlook remained conservative, and he opposed changes in the *radif*s, such modernizations as notation, recording, and public concerts, always steadfastly maintaining the uniqueness of the Persian *radifs* in comparison with similar features in Arabic, Turkish, and Indian music.
>
> (Nettl, Ibid.)

The highest influence of Borumand is associated with his teaching periods at the University of Tehran and the Center. With the launch of a course on Persian music theory and practice in Tehran University in 1965, he was invited by Mehdi Barkechli then head of the music program at the university to be the principal teacher of *radif*. This position that lasted until his retirement in 1974, was an important step in establishing his lineage since the university students were later directed to continue working with him in the Center. From the 1970s, they became preserving actors of the Center's ideologies under Borumand. With the unstable social context of Iran for music education, Borumand received a pedagogical privilege for his affiliation with these institutions. Borumand's ideologies developed a traditionalist stream in Iranian classical music which later formed strategies, policy-making and pedagogic structure of the Center. Investing both on the research and practice, these two state-supported institutions had the benefit of endurance even after the political reformations of 1979 and dominated the mainstream of transmission in Iranian music. Safvat (Mosayyeb-Zadeh 2014) mentions the dominance of Borumand's authority to the point that the music division in Tehran University was indeed for the purpose of having him in the school.

Although improvisation is considered as the height of Persian music artistry, Borumand was strictly critical of its development in his time. In his opinion the music which was done under the title of improvisation was far from authentic. Iranian music had to be transmitted only in oral format, and music notation is not applicable to its delicacy. He had radical notions of the expression of Iranian music by considering sorrow as the characteristics of the high culture and excitement or enchantment as the lower and unvalued aspects. The music should be performed as taught and with deep loyalty for *radif*.

Radif is the ultimate outcome of performance and orchestration ruins this music. He

mentions some of his notions of authenticity in a German-published article "Art and

Authenticity in Iranian Music" as the following:

> *Isalat* (authenticity) defines a phenomenon that is loyal to its origin. Emotions
> should be real in a musician's works, but not fake or imposed. Otherwise, the music
> is not of any value. [...] Today any beautiful piece that sounds oriental cannot be
> called Iranian or authentic music. It may satisfy the listener initially, however, that
> only contains the superficial color of this music instead of the authentic spirit. Our
> music is authentic only when derived from our *radif* and folklore heritage.
>
> (Borumand, in Mosayeb-Zadeh 2014, 25-29, translated by the author)

Borumand's notion of *radif* fundamentally differs from other iconic musicians and *ostads*

including Saba, Payvar and their followers. In a private session in the 1990s (private

archive) with *santur* students and music enthusiast, Payvar emphasizes the importance of

radif as a preliminary material, educational resource, and principle of interpretation, yet

not the final destination of musicianship. He highlights the fact that in the oral tradition,

due to the implications of human's memory or mood of the moment, the details and

expression of *gusheh*s may vary from session to session. This makes proper learning a

challenge for the student. Thus, it is important to transcribe the repertoire for educational

purposes. After learning, the musician should create his own material based on *radif*

instead of copying the same material. Payvar's *maktab* contains the most comprehensive

repertoire comprised of three published *radifs* in elementary, intermediate, and advanced

levels to which students should commit themselves by memorizing and developing *zowq*.

However, radif should only be used as a material for improvisation and innovation. As a

result, Payvar disapproves of remaining on a repeating cycle of *radif* without having

personal renditions after the learning process. This process (in general) is Borumand's

point of criticism.

Borumand also specifies the authenticity in the musical mood and expression:

> Each *dastgah* has a particular wailing mood and sorrow. In Iranian music, this sorrow is spiritually higher than happiness. Many great artists lived in misery of a difficult life through which their value of their work and humanity was refined and they left great art. Happiness has no value. Thus, the identity and value of Iranian music is in its wailing mood that is dominant but not describable. It should be heard in the music.
>
> (Borumand, in Mosayeb-Zadeh 2014, 30, translated by the author)

Similar to the controversial views on Vaziri's modern perspectives, there are opposing

opinions toward the revivalist efforts by Borumand although until recently, his *maktab*

formed a monopolar view in teaching Iranian music especially among the new generation

of his students who were mostly active after the revolution and formed the musical lineage

of the time. He was dismissive of any means of transmission related to the universal music

pedagogy and had less focus on techniques and creativity and more on the preciseness of

the material. His exclusive teachings were later criticized by referring to him as a music

transmitter rather than a performer, improviser, or methodical teacher. Yet, his views and

methods along with Safvat's spiritualized *maktab* became universally circulated and

predominant through his Western scholar-musician students including Bruno Nettl, Jean

During, and Lloyd Miller.

The Center, Safvat's Ideologies, and Formation of a Pedagogical Dichotomy

In light of its preserving goals during the Pahlavi era, the Center was highly received by many musicians in and out of Iran, especially in France where Safvat had also studied, taught, and collaborated with a network of musicians and ethnomusicologists. They believed in the Center as the only possibility of the young generation's working with the old masters and learning correctly. The French ethnomusicologist Jean During mentioned: "One can say without exaggeration that the fate of traditional music in Iran is linked to that of the Center" (1977). Nelly Caron a French expert and co-author of Safvat's book praised the Center's work by saying, "The Center fulfilled our last hopes for saving Iranian traditional music in an atmosphere where young artists can completely dedicate themselves to the study and performance of Iran's virtually vanishing musical heritage' (Ibid.) The Iranian ethnomusicologist, Dr. Hormoz Farhat, then at UCLA, mentioned the effective steps by the Center's activities when Iran perceived the danger of losing the traditional sophistication in the rush for rapid economic growth.

The new center provided stable funding and sponsorship for masters and students to help them focus on the training process. Many lectures, recordings and performances were conducted with the aim of presenting oral tradition and recreating the music of the past, in the pre-Vaziri and pre-notation system of the Qajar era. The transmission was totally oral with the criticism that European notation tended to destroy the spirit of the tradition. The repertoire focused only on two versions of *radif* by Mirza Abdollah and Mirza Hossein-Quli from the late 19th century and the resolution was to train the most authentic musicians.

Even though the spiritualization and revival of the musical heritage of Iran were the prime purpose and identity of the Center musicians, it should not be overlooked that both the modernist's revival and traditionalist revival were two important streams in reaction to the social changes in relation to music and finding the Persian identity in the global realm. When Vaziri and Khaleqi were focusing tremendous efforts to justify the eligibility of Persian music as "scientific" and a worthy art genre, the musical climate of the society was flooded by the supremacy of the Western classical music and the dismissive efforts of the Western music officials such as Gholam Hossein Minbashian and Parviz Mahmood who perceived Iranian music as a sign of backwardness. Their efforts were concentrated on omitting Iranian music from the music schools and replacing the performances and repertoires with Western classical music. Iranian music was marginalized in the form of gatherings or heard in the form of Muharram's *ta'zieh* and mournful rituals. It is noteworthy that the social and cultural context of Iranian society under Pahlavi policies for modernization and cultural affluence was in favor of the dismissive efforts. Reza Shah Pahlavi (*Majalle-ye Musighi* 1939) officially ordered for more "happy music" to be composed and called to change the scenery of old Iranian music. Although Vaziri never aligned with the Pahlavi Court's interference within the professional and ethical aspects of his music and school, many of the new ideas that he brought with him from Europe resonated strongly with the hegemonic discourses of the time that promoted the (rapid) transformation of Iran into a modern, secular nation-state. It also coincided with the "gradual rise of the Western-oriented middle class (increasingly educated abroad) among whom Western ideas and products were both fashionable and status symbols" (Nooshin 2014, 278). From the early decades of the 20th century, the Pahlavi regime made attempts

to forge a distinctly Iranian form of modernity which benefited from the new musical

changes such as arrival of sound recording and broadcasting, adoption of music notation,

formal public concerts and institutionalization of music education and the popularity of the

imported instruments such as piano and violin (Ibid.). In light of Vaziri's new educational

and aesthetic establishment, Khaleqi and Saba found their more moderate ways to

disseminate Vaziri's *maktab* albeit in mature methods.

Ethnomusicologist Laudan Nooshin, in her elaborate chapter on the revivalism in Iranian

music by the two generation of Safvat's group as the first, and their students in the Center

as the second (mostly after the revolution) concludes that although these two trajectories

(modernists and traditionalists) might seem diametrically opposed, both emerged from

essentially the same impulse: "a reaction against the progressive encroachment of Western

music and culture in Iran during the twentieth century" (Nooshin 2014, 277). Yet, it should

be noted that while the traditionalists emphasized their idea of *isalat* based on the

dependence on the past and their lineage, in practice, the modernists were more focusing

on domesticating the methodologies and localizing music in scholarship and practice by the

dissemination of *maktab* and conservatories independent from the state's institutions.

They made more Iranian music publications, compositions, and Iranian styled

performance, than the traditionalists focusing on the preservation through oral

transmission. This medium was also changed after the revolution and the Center started

using notation and other media of teaching, as some of my interlocutors had experienced

before starting to follow particular *maktabs.*

Regarding the pedagogy of *hal*, while Safvat and other traditionalists believe it to be an essential element and the fruit of authenticity, they emphasize that it cannot be described nor learned because of its mental and emotional level. This pedagogical aspect is indeed where their overemphasized notion on the metaphysical, Sufi, and mystic level of Persian classical music conflicts with the reality of training process and possible achievement of *hal* in a *maktab*. *"So, how much of my music education really results in a spiritual sacred practice?",* a music pupil would wonder. The traditionalists emphasize that the history of post-Islamic limitations on music performance in Persia brought Iranian music to a very high metaphysical and mystical level by the musicians who secretly continued the practice. As ethnomusicologist Lloyd Miller describes, Iranian traditional music seemed to lift the soul from the body to a higher plane (Miller, 1977). However, an overlooked point here is that the concept of '*erfan*, at least in practical sense, is not a main aspect of Iranian classical music performance, but even a case of distinction between music and religion or theology.

The view of spirituality and theological domain of Iranian classical music by traditionalists in the 1960s was highly received by the Orientalist views of many Western scholars, institutions and international academies that accommodated even more circulation of the Center's values and made pervasive efforts to substantiate the spiritual frame and religious sacred aesthetics for the music of the Orient. In Iran, however, this was a new stream toward traditionalism—perhaps an organic response to the rapid course of modernization, new threats from the Western pop music genres which were imposed to the music of Iran. It was the newly drawn image of nationalist traditionalism and social fabrication of Iranian artistic identity vacuumed from the West. This traditionalism was mostly reflected in Safvat's teachings and ethical discourse which he introduced as his philosophy.

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Dariush Talaei, a *tar* player and theorist who worked with the Center analyzes Safvat's influence in Iranian music:

> Safvat's influence in Iranian music is more of a Sufi thinker rather than a distinguished musician or performer. By directing the Center in 1969-1979 and teaching in the music department of Tehran University, he proceeded the way of thinking and working based on the 'e*rfani* (mystic) beliefs and his special theories which influenced most of the young musicians of the time directly or indirectly. This influence coincided the era during which Iranians had special attention to literature, philosophy, culture, customs, and Iranian pride was very intense and even many foreign scholars came to study Iranian culture.

> (Talaei 1993,147. translated by the author)

However, Talaei also critiques some aspects of the book *The Art of Persian Music* (1991) on Iranian music, co-authored under Safvat's supervisions and by his students, Jean During, and Zia Mirabdolbaghi. "It seems that the shared intimacy and *'erfani* sectarian between the authors had been the motivation for this book" (Ibid, 147). Although the book was co-authored, it offers a thorough exploration of Safvat's opinions. He believed there were two contrasting meaning of music: "natural" such as Iranian music that aligns with the human's natural balance, and "impressive" such as Western music which impresses human while it also includes two types of negative and positive. Accordingly, musical features such as pitch range, dynamics, tuning and intervals, rhythm, technique, and *hal* are found—albeit differently in both types. For instance, based on some physical and perceptive aspects of musical loudness, Safvat tries to attribute Iranian music with "good nature" and other musical scopes as "bad or harmful". While this type of notions fails to prove scientifically—e.g., because loudness is a very flexible feature at least in the modern world due to the recording and broadcasting technicalities—Safvat contextualizes them through a chain of mystic themes and ethical art attitudes. Talaei also critiques this method as the following:

Although Safvat expresses his admiration of innovation at the end of his article, by bringing dualities such as natural and unnatural, beneficial and harmful, based on his ideological notions of Iranian music, confines us to the traps of limitation which contradict the innovative soul of Iranian music. Also contradictory to the authors' claim toward adding to the new generation's knowledge of their heritage, we see semi-philosophical generalizations which not only fails to serve compelling research and studies, but also presents a trendy way of speaking about this music.

(Talaei 1993, 149. translated by the author)

The original pedagogy of *maktab* Saba was consistently disseminated by his prominent students such as Faramarz Payvar with a focus on the secular aspects of training and development of *hal* through the understanding of musical skills, Persian poetry, ethics of performance and the publication of the repertoire for pedagogical reasons. By contrast, traditionalist views influenced by Safvat and institutionalization of the theosophical directions created a dichotomy in the unity of *Maktab* Saba. While the oral tradition was a revival of the old framework, an overemphasis and lucidity on spirituality to the level of a Sufi practice was totally external and modern to the *maktab* heritage and its pedagogical authenticity.

Additionally, the rapid reformation and cultural ideologies shaped during and after the 1979 Islamic revolution shut down most of the independent musical activities. These reformations marginalized the voice of many secular arts such as musicians who had continued *Maktab Saba* and conservatory systems. Conversely, the Islamic regime showed more tolerance to the Center musicians and kept the door open for the traditionalist stream. Safvat's Center was one of the rare institutions which survived the new Islamic regime's propaganda. However, many of the resources, sponsorship and programs were canceled or diverted which caused change of resolutions and conflicts among its musicians.

Safvat continued teaching and publishing his views on Europe. While many pedagogical and scholarly views on the *hal*, aesthetics and *maktab* remained muted under the Islamic regime of Iran, the traditionalist conceptualizations based on the sacred and spiritual nature of all Iranian arts including classical music and the overdominance of Sufi attitude and practice remained the main and only depiction of Persian music aesthetics studied and published in the West. Many primary scholars of the field including Bruno Nettle, Ggenichi T'suge, and Margaret Caton mostly worked with Safvat and his musicians, especially Nour-Ali Borumand. The collaboration eventually created a scholarly polarized perspective on the topic. As a result, the dichotomy added a new level of incompatible waves back to the scholarship and practice in Iran where the independent pedagogies were struggling for a secular legitimacy and sustaining the authenticity of *Maktab Saba-Vaziri* under the Islamic Republic.

Aesthetics of Hal: Sacred or Secular, That is the Question

Regardless of its dominance, *Maktab* Saba's pedagogical position as a transitional point between the past—both in oral and Vaziri's training—and the future, which was divided between two groups of *maktab* successors, Faramarz Payvar and Dariush Safvat. While Payvar continued as a scholastic *maktab* master, Dariush Safvat , directed the traditionalist movement. I suggested the word "scholastic" here as a clarification between Payvar's moderate and structuralist course of succession in Saba's school, in contrast to Safvat's traditionalist and returning frames, especially in post-revolutionary Iran. Payvar and many other students of Saba focused on the systematic and structural ways of Saba's *maktab* including the necessity of music literacy, ensemble performance, balance between vocal

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and instrumental aspects of Iranian music, and more internal approach toward mysticism. On the contrary, Safvat and his counterparts focused on the returning-stage for Iranian music to the oral system, vocal centrality, monophony, and more notable codes of behavior based on Sufi conduct. The former was generally known as "*melli* (national[82]) and *asil* (authentic) music of Iran", while the latter received the state's recognition and supportive space after the 1979 revolution. This policy was particularly as a result of the Islamic regime's rejection of the active artistic movements including the national-authentic groups during the Shah's era. However, these aspects of Persian aesthetic pedagogy and *maktab* tradition had been overlooked in the previous studies of ethnomusicology.

The new regime's propaganda affected the accessibility of music on post-revolutionary media and musical scenes including radio and television, concerts, and national publicity. While many publications by Bruno Nettl (1972), Jean During (1991), Nelly Caron and Dariush Safvat (1966), and Margaret Caton (1994; 2001), have focused mostly on the sacred aspects of *'erfan* in Iranian music through the dominance of Boroumand and Safvat's traditionalistic views in the West, the more methodological and secular aspects of *'erfan* and aesthetic affect in performance and *maktab* learning of Saba's school have been overlooked.

Studying the views and *maktab* systems by the Persian musicians especially derived from the Center and Vaziri-Saba, I categorize the dominant ethos of *hal* in Iranian classical music performance in two ideological frames: The theosophy of *'erfan* (mysticism) and the

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[82] Not to be confused with the Iranian Communist Tudeh Party (1960s), also known as Leftists, that wrapped itself in "nationalism" to be attractive to Iranians (The Todeh Party in Wikipedia)

aesthetic structure. The first view disseminated by the Center focused on music as a sacred practice defined by spirituality as of a Sufi culture, while the latter developed by Vaziri-Saba focused on ethos of *hal* as a secular aesthetic structure of art music. As mentioned, these two frames formed a dichotomy in *maktab* education especially after the dominance of Safvat's teachings through the Center. Yet, the applicability of sacred spirituality in Safvat's depiction of classical music seems questionable. This is not only for the reasons of its failure to stand to what Safvat mentions as "musical philosophy" (as critiqued by Talaei) but also because of lacking the consideration of the following aspects of the Persian musical life.

With the normalized thread of mystic poetry, metaphors and ethics in Persian poetry, language, artistic concepts, and musicking in daily secular life, if we consider the musical sorrow to be an *'erfani* or mystic type, we need to categorize it both in the sacred and secular realms. While many Sufis, mystics and poets of the Medieval periods were also aware of music theory and scholarship, the opposite was not applicable to music performers especially in modern Iran. Most of the musician-performers were not Sufis nor mystics, even though they had an active understanding or engagement with the poetics of mystic poetry and arts. Moreover, the Shi'a Islamic rules and theocracy divided boundaries between the religious aspects of the civil life and professional music performance of classical music. Considering this fact creates a form of crystallization between the followers of the secular musical life and those of the sacred values which results in the dichotomy of *maktab* and the criticism in the applicability of the sacred pedagogy by Safvat's Center.

Due to its pervasive boldness and dominance, especially after Islam, the mystic poetics and interpretation were seen as the only important aspect of all artistic educational content including music. Many non-Iranian scholars frequently focused on the content of *'erfan* or *'erfani* practice in their study of music performance (e.g., During et al. 1991; Caton 2008). Influenced by the domination of the Orientalist directions, this dimension of Persian and Islamic art captured most of their interest as the "exotic" part of the musical culture that in fact, has been overly and emphatically presented in the Orientalist scholarship. However, it is important to note that while the *'erfani* culture and thought is present in the aesthetic education and interpretation of *hal* and sorrow in Iranian music, becoming an *'aref* (mystic), or receiving essential education of *'erfan* as a gnosis is not a point of focus in the musical *maktab* tradition.

Since the 1960s onward, most of Western or global perspectives overlooked the many dimensions and layers of mystic aesthetics in the content, structure, and methods of Persian arts due to their interest and focused lenses upon the Orientalist angles of Persian "Islamic art and aesthetics" in performance which were their newly discovered priority. In fact, the content and aesthetic expression of affect in music is a notable example of a practice that had multiple layers of compatibility to harmonize with the tight frames of religious, political, and tragic social history while maintaining the essence of its artistic and philosophical views. Mystic poetry and philosophy had the capacity to offer a wide range of interpretations in music and art and turn it into an aesthetic frame. In this sense, we can highlight that an *'erfani* (mystic) culture and understanding, especially within the poetic framework of Persian art, is necessary in order to cultivate and develop the conceptual understanding, expressive practice, and interpretation of emotions in Iranian music.

However, this mystic feature does not define the aesthetic education of classical music and performance as transformation of a musician into an *'aref*, Sufi, or mystic.

Moreover, it should be clarified that the existence of *'erfani*, Sufi, and mystic music as distinct "genres" with all the ritualistic, theological, aesthetic, and musical definitions and characteristics adds to the distinction and borderlines between the *'erfani* as a musical genre and *'erfan* as a characteristic (or mystic aesthetics) in the "genre of classical music". However, the Orientalist view as mentioned earlier, overlooks this distinction by attributing all aspects of practical *'erfan* to the classical music genre. This view has influenced the global scholarship on Iranian music especially due to the more silenced voice of secularism of art music in Iran after the 1979 revolution and underrepresentation of the secular *maktab* in ethnomusicology publications. The question I propose in order to clarify this overlooked distinction in my argument is that "is Persian classical music *'erfani*—as of the genre? Or is it *'erfani* as influenced by *'erfan*?" I find the latter to be the accurate in Persian classical music. The misconception derives from the fact that most of previous publications (e.g., works by Borumand, Safvat, During, Caron, Caton, Miller) attribute the characteristics and ethics of the *'erfani* genre to the classical genre which is fundamentally secular, urban, and a court performing genre in its essence. The fact roots in the Center's efforts, partly for the purpose of purifying this music from a marginalized past and "threatened heritage" in its present time, which also happened to be the focus of interest for Western scholarship. While the '*erfani* thought and system of aesthetics is often present within the ideological and interpretive aspects of Iranian classical music, it is not the descriptive and definer of its identity and performance, at least not since the independent training of music in the Qajar era.

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Secularized Aesthetics: A New Window

In this chapter, I made attempts to present an image of the training focus for the ordinary learner of Iranian classical music without the overestimation of mystic practice and ethics. Parts of this image is the secularized path of classical music pedagogy which has been overlooked. This secularization has firmly established a separate and distinct process of transmission over the past two centuries even though still many internal ties remain between the culture of *'erfan* and artistic transmission. In a broader sense, my argument approves that the pedagogical aspect of *hal* in Iranian classical music is more of a conceptual, perceptive, and systematic pedagogy of *'erfan* rather than its practical and ritualized tradition and ethics of mysticism which was highlighted by Safvat. Thus, teachers of classical music do not transmit or treat their repertoire and methodologies through alternating the students into *'erfan* practitioners, Sufis, or mystics. There are partly similar pedagogical, performing, and ethical values common in the Persian thought which are transmitted and elaborated through years of close training; however, the methodological, stylistic, logical, and ideological approach differ from the context of *'erfan* and development of *hal* in the theological sense.

Through my interviews with musicians and teachers in other chapters of this study, I observed that none of them referred to classical music as a mystic practice or Sufi ideology while most of them believed in the individualized appreciation, ethical values, and philosophical self-awareness. The growing change in the creative approach among the Center's musicians, years after the 1979 revolution as well as the current critiques and regenerations upon the traditionalist ideologies of "sacred vs. secular" shaped by Safvat

and Borumand who began a dichotomic pedagogy conversely confirms a distance between theory and practice regardless of the vast influence in its time of formation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Aim and Purpose of Research

This thesis explores the aesthetics of sorrow and melancholic expression in Iranian classical music, focusing on the discursive and performing aspects of its pedagogical tradition. The concept of *hal* (an ecstatic and meditative state), also shared in the practice of Sufism and *'erfan* (Persian mysticism), contains a wide range of meanings. It also connects the performer to the experience of affect. Although barely defined by performers, the ethos of *huzn* (sorrow) and *suz* (a burning heart) in the expression of *hal* predominates the aesthetics of Persian music. This ethos of performance is cultivated through years of close training in *maktab* (traditional schools of artistry and intellect) and close master-disciple relationships as a musical life. The education is also based on the extensive repertoire of *radif* comprised of many elaborate *gushehs* categorized under twelve *dastgahs*, with fundamental influence from Persian poetics and philosophy of love and suffering. As a result of consistent training enriched by the appreciation of Persian poetics and *radif* complexities, along with pedagogical methods of an *ostad* in *maktab*, Iranian pupils cultivate their *zowq* (artistic talent) and develop the skills of interpretation for aesthetic expression in their performance. In this research, I have focused on the *maktab*

pedagogy based on the content of radif and its poetic intertextualities, and the master-disciple tradition through which the expression of *hal* is transmitted in Persian classical music.

General Results and Main Contributions

To investigate the affect of *hal* and aesthetic education of sorrow in pedagogy, I have conducted my research focusing on the content of repertoire and practice of learning. I have made sincere attempts to use various methodologies, including my ethnographic study through interviewing several prominent *maktab* music teachers and advanced students who finished their training in *maktab*. I have included my autoethnography and observed recollections as a native musician with fifteen years of training in *maktab,* and sharing my experiences as a female musician active in the music scene of Iran. Finally, I used analytical and historical research of the textual and poetic content of *radif* and the way they are taught in a *maktab*. For a closer analysis of the pedagogical styles, I have used archival material such as music documentaries and audio recordings of several distinguished musicians from interviews or teaching in their classrooms.

I have introduced an understanding of the key concepts such as *hal*, *huzn*, *zowq* and *suz* through recollections of my *santur* class and related studies on these *maktabs*. I have tried to let the reader understand and imagine the situation of encountering *hal* in the classroom and, most of all, an experience of the *maktab* with a musician. I have attempted to let the autoethnography, poetry, and other metaphors speak for themselves and be a part of the experience.

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In defining the conceptual background of *huzn* and *hal*, I studied numerous resources in Persian music, poetics, and philosophical resources from the Medieval treatises and poets, especially the most popular ones in Iran, including Suhravardi, Farabi, Ghazali, Attar, and Mowlana Rumi, as well as the interlink of their views with the more extensive philosophical literature of Islamic mysticism. I have explained the vast multifaceted and shared terminology of the related words to musical *hal*, such as *huzn, suz, gham, zowq, wajd,* and *tarab* in terms of their meaning and contexts of references to show the scholarly and poetic reference that these terms carry in Persian and the broader mystic culture of Islam. My studies show that although there is a wide range of terms that are similarly referrable concerning *hal* in the Middle Eastern philosophical and poetic discourse, there is a variety of cultural understanding and application of these terms based on the context, discipline, time, and the region in which they were applied. Also, I have discussed many levels of metaphoric reference and application of these concepts, making them relatable and localized for Persian speakers and musicians. For instance, some concepts such as tarab (ecstacy) and the meaning of motreb (entertainer) have been redefined in Iranian music through time and social changes. These concepts shape the intellectual frame of musical expression and emotional interpretation of Persian music and other arts.

Investigating Iranian music education, I focused on the discourse of *maktab* as a school of intellect and artistry. I have argued that regardless of its importance as a relatively new musical concept (since the 19th century), this term still holds uncertainties for musicians in terms of its definition and boundaries. *Maktab* centers both style and teaching practice, while the specific repertoire and individualized method of teaching also shapes its identity. Depending on the musical attitudes of musicians, *maktab* may have various priorities as its

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foundation. For instance, musicians with more traditionalist views and concerns over Western methods as a threat to Iranian music emphasize the oral transmission and the centrality of the o*stad's* version of *radif*. On the other hand, musicians with more modern views based on Vaziri's school highlight the method of teaching and analyzing views, *zowq,* and novelty in progressive learning of *radif* from an *ostad* and targeting for new versions and renditions of it. My study shows that *maktab* is an interactive process with specific musical, ethical, and pedagogical components. Through biographical examples of *maktab* musicians and their historical genealogy, I present the most crucial aspects of *radif,* including the dominance of *ostad* and his lineage, listening tradition, master-disciple relationship, and ethics of *maktab*. Through many historical and ethnographic research examples, I share a comprehensive image of *maktab* and its process in a capacity that has never been presented before.

To delve more into the pedagogical aspects of *maktab* in aesthetic education and interpretation of *huzn*, I have examined the content of *radif* repertoire and its pedagogical application as well as numerous examples of pedagogical aspects of performance in a classroom. In my analysis of the *maktab's* repertoire, I have demonstrated how the appreciation of Persian poetry and its thematic, rhythmic, and interpretative connections help musicians develop *zowq* and the aesthetic expression of sorrow. By translating selected examples, I have tried to make this connection explicit. I have also discussed the historical, symbolic, and structural aspects of Persian music with the dominance of sorrow and melancholic affect in the categories of Persian *dastgah* and repertoire system, rhythmicality and musical rests, dynamics, and ornamentations through individualized

interpretations of music. These features together shape the emotional interpretation of Iranian music and its aesthetics.

In my second phase of pedagogical analysis, I have shared most of my ethnographic research collected from my interviews with musicians, my observations of the *maktab* and my teachers' points of view, and comparative analysis of pedagogies I could find through private archives of the great masters of the 20th century. This pedagogical study is a unique and multifaceted original research that stands out not only for its vast scope of topics involved in *radif* training but also the variety and expanded methodologies I have used to include examples from a large timespan of nearly one hundred years in Iranian *maktab*. In my ethnographic research, I have tried to present the diversity of opinions and pedagogical styles among certain *maktab* musicians and let my interlocutors' reflective opinions speak for the quality of their experience in their *maktab* education. In my archival samples, I have taken advantage of non-customary writing, such as shifting between the formats of dialogues, set and scene selection, and description, in addition to my analysis and comparative views of them. I have attempted to let the reader use an unrestrained imagination and journey through time to visit these classrooms, understand the chemistry and human relations between the *ostad* and students, and develop an analytical review. I have included photos and other documents from my personal experiences in *maktab,* which I hope will add to the understanding of *maktab* lifestyle in contemporary Iran.

The aesthetic education of music in Iran has been influenced by the division of musical genres and social class due to new socio-cultural changes in 20th-century Iran. During modernity and the new cultural exchanges with the West in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi

eras, forming an elite class and establishing classical music as an art genre defined new

borders for musical activities and education. The social changes such as the constitutional

revolution (1905-1911), the public awareness regarding the national identity and Persian

heritage, and foreign cultural exchanges added to the meaning of the elite middle class.

These changes soon led to the distinction of taste and stereotypical adjustments in Iranian

society. With the establishment of formal music schools, media and recording, public

concerts, and general improvement in the education system, classical musicians found a

new meaning in the entity of *maktab* and the distinction of art music. Accordingly,

entertainment music was categorized under the uneducated and underclass with the title

of *motrebi* from which *maktab* musicians tried to separate themselves. This case was

notably stricter for female musicians, who were still under the stereotypical image of the

courtesan and female entertainers of the royal court in previous eras (e.g., Safavid and

Qajar). Thus, the *maktab* education and new modernist foundations, such as Vaziri's

musical club and ensemble for female musicians, created an opportunity for talented

women musicians such as Qamar to perform and be active in the art music genre, far from

the stereotypical image of the past. However, after the 1979 revolution and strict

prohibition on female musicians' activities, the aesthetic education of *maktab* music and

the musical genre gained another social role in socio-political resistance. Through sharing

my autoethnographic views as a female musician and leader of an all-women ensemble, I

have argued the paradigms of aesthetic education and *maktab* in forming female agency in

the art genre and musicianship. This research is the first of its kind due to the focus of the

study and the autoethnographic method. I have argued how the concept of *maktab*

education and art music has created a shelter for female musicians and what factors changed its future.

The last part of my thesis focuses on the emergence of dichotomic pedagogies in the renowned and influential *Maktab Saba* as a result of revivalist movements in the 1960s. With the domination of traditionalist views as a response to the course of modernity in Iran, musicians found Western elements of music education such as notation, orchestration, and new theories of music threatening the authenticity of Iranian (traditional) music in their point of view. Supported by the state, the foundation of *The Center for Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Music* under the direction of Dariush Safvat focused tremendous efforts on preserving Iranian music according to the pre-modern oral traditions. Safvat was one of Saba's students who became explicitly interested in the spirituality of Iranian music after educating himself in mysticism. In light of his views, the state-sponsored institutionalization of the Center collaborating with the music department of Tehran University, and the authoritative role of Noor-Ali Borumand as an important figure in teaching *radif*, the conservative views of *maktab* developed a traditionalist ideology in contrast to Saba's *maktab* followers. The Center continued its activities after the revolution and survived the Islamic reformations of the new government due to its attachment to the ideas of spirituality and tradition. Accordingly, the dichotomic pedagogies based on *maktab* Saba led to a division between traditionalist musicians' focus on the spirituality of classical music as a mystic practice and modernist-national musicians' focus on secular art. The traditionalist concept was encouraged by the Orientalist approaches by many Western scholars and academies during the 1960s-1980s and influenced the dissemination of Iranian music in Iran and worldwide afterward.

Challenges and Limitations of this Research

During the course of this research, I encountered several limitations that had an impact on the research conduct. The most challenging aspect was the interdisciplinary approach of this study and its extended roots in the discourses of philosophy, poetics, history, affect, musical aesthetics, and performing practice in Iran. Additionally, throughout history, many Persian concepts regarding emotion and poetry are shared with a larger area of the Middle East. The cultural, linguistic, and intellectual boundaries of these concepts were often blurred or crossed each other, especially due to the focus on the authority of Islam and Arab language as the scholarship in many areas, including Persia. Also, the inclusion of poetics, arts, and human sciences as parts of the liberal arts and theosophy in Persia amalgamated many concepts (e.g., *hal, huzn, wajd*) beyond the musical definitions and in various disciplines. In many cases, I could not find sufficient resources on music, specifically on Persia, as most of the Medieval scholarship were produced and circulated under the larger territory of Islam, and mostly in Arabic language or culture. This factor caused more challenges to interpreting these concepts in the Persian discourse and in a more secular context of music than Islamic Sufism. Most English scholarship on the Islamic world overlook or marginalize the long history of philosophy, art, and religion (e.g., Zoroastrianism) in Persia before Islam. However, these philosophies were redeveloped in new ways by Persian Islamic scholars and still exist in Iranian daily life and traditions.

Another limitation was the lack of written and recorded resources regarding the history and pedagogy of Iranian music. Many of the publications, old video and audio resources, and archives from the pre-revolutionary Iran have been out of access over the past fifty

years due to the Islamic Republic restrictions. Also, a limited number of recordings, interviews, and documentary videos captured on media from the past century of Iran have not been re-published after the revolution. Thus, my accessibility and reliance on these samples have been limited to YouTube, social media, and private archives. Many of these resources are not of perfect sound and video quality, and no metadata or searchable techniques are defined for them. This fact made the process of searching, using, writing, and referring to these samples very challenging.

In my ethnographic study, the most crucial limitation was travelling barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the aftermath of political movements in Iran from 2020 to 2023 when this thesis was finished. The safety risks of these situations required me to conduct most of my interviews virtually or in connection with Iranian musicians outside Iran when there was no chance of a virtual connection to Iran. Also, due to the qualitative method of my research and its focus on elaborative conversations with *maktab* musicians, I had to choose a limited number of interviewees and arrange multiple sessions of interviews and discussions, which was not possible for all the interviewees.

The time period was also a time of national trauma at many levels for Iranians in and outside of Iran, which made the situation emotionally sensitive for my interviewees and me. To receive sufficient and detailed information, I had to review my interlocutors' musical biographies and history, including joining the *maktab*, and the quality of their education with them first. Then, discuss their professional views of their *maktab* and emotional aesthetics, their communications, and their current views and reflections regarding their *maktab* training. This knowledge could not be collected over short

interviews but from more in-depth communication, professional conversations, and the building of trust. Many of my questions could not be asked directly. Instead, I had to collect my answers during the explanations by my interlocutors and from free discussions. Even so, I found this close study of a limited number of individuals and oral histories very beneficial to my topic regarding the master-disciple traditions and pedagogical experiences. It allowed me to focus on the quality and particular case of each individual and reflect on their views rather than generalizing a large number of perspectives and notions in my research.

Contributions and Future Perspectives

A new experience in this thesis—which I found challenging and creative—was embedding the autoethnographic research and my voice both as a native informant and a scholar. To accomplish this goal in academic research and writing, I had to change the roles between my past observations and experiences as a musician and my current analysis as a scholar. The challenges of autoethnography on female music as a marginalized musical phenomenon in Iran and its socio-political barriers also added to my research implications.

It is due to the underrepresentation of these topics and the voice of autoethnography by native scholars that I chose firmly to include my individual voice as a musician and a new method of writing in poetic language as a Persian cultural preference. Persian culture is one of poetics, metaphors, imagery, and highly emotional rhetoric dominantly. This is how most people communicate, learn, perceive, and live in musical and daily life. Accordingly, characteristics of Persian poetics and sentiments are not easily reachable for non-Persian scholars unless they know the language. Yet, in my understanding, excluding this feature

from cultural studies would not give the non-Persians an accurate image of the culture. Thus, one of my resolutions for this thesis, beyond the research content, was to use the local ways of the Persian language (e.g., metaphors, poetics, poetry, imagery) to add to the conventional ethnographic research and writing methods of ethnomusicology in the standardized academic language. I deliberately chose to write poetry in Persian, albeit with English translation, and to include emotional scenes and quotations from the documentaries and my classroom recollections to emphasize the reality of these feelings for the musicians. I also tried to highlight the importance of poetics and imagery in Persian culture and philosophy, which need to be appreciated by the reader for a better understanding of the topic. I believe that ethnomusicology scholarship can proceed closer to the organic nature of the culture under study and let the readers experience the topic beyond only reading the scholarly theories and academic homogeneity.

Future perspectives concerning this project may focus on comparative or solo focus on specific *maktabs* based on their pedagogies, ideologies, and social destinations. Another view can be related to the current aesthetics of emotion as it is shared by Iranian musicians on social media, especially regarding gender and social divisions. Another important factor related to the aesthetics of sorrow in Iranian music, which I exclude from my research in favor of the focus, is its relation to the Shiʻa Muharram mourning rituals in Iran. Under the influence of these rituals, especially the passion plays of *taʻzieh,* some aspects of the *radif* music repertoire, musical skills, and emotional content were transmitted by musicians who found religious support more in favor of Shiʻa musical genres than secular art music.

In this research, through historical and ethnographic studies analysis, I have tried to shape a scholarly framework for studying aesthetic education and affect in Iranian classical music. This study lies in the intersection of world music education, ethnomusicology of affect, anthropology of affect and aesthetics, and Iranology. I have tried to add a new perspective in the academy's less explored research and writing methods, including the autoethnographic and autobiographic voice and poetic writing. I hope this research will add to the aesthetic education of music in Iran and the larger scope of ethnomusicology worldwide.

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