

UDK 78(55:100)

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## WESTERN MUSICAL INFLUENCES IN PERSIA

The revolution of 1978/79 brought to power in Persia<sup>1</sup> a reactionary clerical regime which has established a virtual theocracy in that country. Among the basic tenets of this regime's ideology is the rejection of the west. In fact, it can be argued that swift and indiscriminate westernisation, particularly in the 1960's and 70's, was a major provocation which helped to set in motion the massive revolution which brought the collapse of the age-old institution of monarchy.

In music, as well as in all other socio-cultural activities, the revolution and its aftermath, have tended to reverse westernisation, so dominant in the previous decades. For a time, there appeared to be some ambivalence as to the acceptability of all kinds of musics, as Islam has an uncertain, if not proscriptive, attitude towards music.<sup>2</sup> This position has been gradually modified, however, to the extent that native classical, as well as some western art music, are currently endorsed, while all varieties of popular/commercial music (native and western alike) are decidedly rejected.

The western influences on Persian music and the westernisation of the musical life of the country had begun some 125 years ago. Nāseraddin Shah, emperor from 1848 to 1896, was the first Persian monarch to travel to Europe on state visits. The musical events he had attended, particularly ceremonial and martial music he had

<sup>1</sup> The native name of the country under discussion here has always been Irān, but for sound historic reasons the name of Persia, a region of Irān, has been applied to the country by the outside world. In 1935 the government of Persia requested the use of the native and collective name Irān by the international community. This has resulted in a regrettable disassociation between today's Irān and yesterday's Persia. It has distanced the country from her ancient civilisation and her splendid cultural heritage, all of which are identified, rightly or wrongly, with the name Persia. Having realised the error of the earlier move, in the 1950's again the name Persia was officially reinstated. Unfortunately, the international community was reluctant to accept one more change and continued to use the name Irān. For my part, I have always used the traditional name Persia and the adjective Persian, thereby hoping to invoke proper historic associations in the minds of those with whom I aim to communicate.

<sup>2</sup> Islam is not alone in regarding the effects of music on the faithful with suspicion. Both Judaism and Christianity also have had long histories in the rejection of music. Chanting, considered as an extension of recitation, with an approved text, has posed no problems for any religion including Islam. It is the effect of pure, or instrumental, music which has been difficult to understand and to sanction. Let us not forget that it took Christianity one thousand years before it could even admit the organ to the church.

heard at official receptions, had greatly impressed him. Soon after his return from his first European tour in 1862,<sup>3</sup> Nāseraddin Shah ordered the establishment of a military band, on western models, for use on ceremonial occasions at his Court.

The creation of such a military band was no easy proposition. A long tradition of indigenous martial music had existed in Persia; however, this was a kind of music suited only to the exigencies of warfare. It was a wild and deliberately cacophonous music intended to illicit raw courage in the fighting men, while planting fear in the heart of the enemy. The instruments used in such ensembles were double reeds, native horns and trumpets, plus drums of all variety.<sup>4</sup> It was not an urbane musical fare comparable to the European military music of the 19th century — which had caught the fancy of the Shah — with its mixture of airs, overtures, marches, polkas and waltzes.

A French musician, named Alfred Lemair, was brought to Tehran to oversee the establishment of a music school for the training of band musicians. Lemair's efforts, and the school formed around him, became the seeds out of which western musical influences in Persia grew and spread.

By the end of the 19th century, the modest music school created in Tehran had grown to be a kind of conservatory where musical instruments as well as notation, theory and harmony of western music were taught. A number of Frenchmen had followed Monsieur Lemair as teachers of this school. The pupils trained were largely conscripts or commissioned officers, whose main duty was to cater to the musical needs of the Imperial Court. Some of the pupils had developed into more accomplished musicians who became instrumental in spreading the influence of their western musical training into the civilian life. On the whole, this initial contact with western music, be it of a very limited type, had quite remarkable consequences:

1. Persian music had been always learnt by rote. No system of notation was ever followed in composition or in performance. Composition, heavily reliant on the art of improvisation, was not separate from performance; both were totally free of attachment to written symbols. Now for the first time, the use of musical notation was necessary. Music had to be learned from symbols on a page and had to be repeated in a fixed way without alteration.
2. In having to study the basics of the theory and harmony of western music, students of the music school came in contact with major and minor modes, scale concepts and keys.<sup>5</sup> In learning harmony and playing harmonised pieces, the students were impressed by the novelty of the use of more than one sound at the same time, according to a systematic procedure.<sup>6</sup>
3. For the needs of the military band western musical instruments were imported and were taught at the School. These woodwind and brass instruments were es-

<sup>3</sup> During his long reign, Nāseraddin Shah went on three separate European tours. The practice of paying state visits to European countries was then established and all Persian emperors after him have frequently gone on such tours.

<sup>4</sup> The only remaining application of such an ensemble in modern times is its use in the city of Mašhad, playing a wild music from a high tower, at sunrise and sunset. In ancient times in all Persian cities this kind of music was played daily to greet the sun and to bid it farewell.

<sup>5</sup> Two of the Persian modes seem to resemble the major and the minor of western music in their intervallic structures. They are however distinct in their melodic contents, as Persian modes are not mere successions of tones but each centres around preexisting melodic models.

<sup>6</sup> Authentic Persian music is monophonic, or, at times, heterophonic.

sentially incapable of producing intervals peculiar to native music.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, gradually they were put to uses outside the military band music and found their way into native music. Later, other instruments were also brought into the country. The violin, in particular, found great favour as it can fully express the intervals and nuances of Persian music. Even the piano, undoubtedly the most unsuitable instrument for Persian music, was also introduced, from late 19th century, and has been widely used.

4. The principle of a methodical approach to the study of music and the value of theoretical, in conjunction with the practical, learning were all new and had a profound influence. Traditionally, Persian musical studies were limited to learning an instrument according to personal methods of a teacher in private; any knowledge of the music itself could only be incidental to practical training.
5. As improvisation is quite central to the performance style of Persian classical music, the use of large ensembles proves impractical. Even with a small group, various instruments must take turns in leading the improvisation. Furthermore, the use of an orchestra can hardly be justified in a music which is fundamentally monophonic. Nevertheless, the colourfulness and the volume of sound in the western band or orchestra were alluring enough for the Persian musicians to begin the formation of large ensembles in their own music. Eventually, harmonised pieces were composed for such ensembles which were made of a combination of native and European instruments.

Early in the 20th century a number of Persians emerged as prominent figures who instituted reforms within the traditional music all of whom were influenced, directly or indirectly, by western music, through the above mentioned school. Qolām Rezā Mimbāšiān was the first of these musicians who attempted to transcribe in western notation one of the modal systems of the traditional music. He also composed marches for the use of the military band in Persian modes.

A very gifted musician was Qolām Hoseyn Darviš who had learned the rudiments of western notation through contacts with military musicians, without having been himself a student of the Music School. He was an excellent performer of the *tār* and *setār* (6 and 4-string long-necked lutes, respectively). He was particularly impressed with the western approach to composition as a separate endeavour from performance; also, the idea of large ensembles had found favour with him. By the time of his death in 1926, Darviš had composed a large number of pieces in Persian modes which were written in western notation and were clearly influenced by the design of western pieces in ternary forms. He created a new genre of instrumental piece called *pišdarāmad*, emulating the structure of a typical overture. These compositions were monophonic, however; Darviš had no knowledge of harmony. They were to be played either by solo instruments or by an ensemble, mixing Persian and western instruments, playing in unison and octaves.

A third musical personality, emerging as an immensely influential figure, particularly in 1920's and 30's, was Ali Naqi Vaziri. He was the first Persian to seek a period of musical studies abroad. Already a prominent performer of Persian instruments, he

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the semi-tone and the whole-tone, Persian music employs neutral-tones which are larger than the semi-tone, but smaller than the whole-tone. There is also an interval larger than the whole-tone but smaller than the augmented-tone.

<sup>8</sup> Vaziri's first discussion of his quarter-tone theory appears in his earliest publication: *Dastur-e Tār*, Berlin, Kāvīāni Press, 1922.

set out for France just before the outbreak of the First World War. By the time he returned to Tehran in the early 1920's he had accumulated a considerable knowledge of western composition; he had also learned to play the piano and the violin. An enormously energetic and charismatic man, over the next 20 years, he became the most dominant musical personality in Persia. He established a school of music of his own and set about training young musicians according to western methods. He remained faithful to Persian musical traditions but imposed upon them what he regarded as needed reforms. He wrote numerous compositions for solo instruments, *tār* and violin in particular, also songs and operettas. In a number of books and articles, he put forth a new theory of Persian music, according to which the octave is divided into 24 equidistant quarter-tones.<sup>8</sup>

The quarter-tone theory of Vaziri is an artificial system proposed in order to make possible the adoption of a kind of harmonic practice, based on western tonal harmony. There is no doubt that Vaziri, a very sound traditional musician, was fully aware that authentic Persian music has no quarter-tones and that intervals other than the semi-tone and the whole-tone, common in the native music, are not multiples of the quarter-tone.<sup>9</sup> Evidently, he simply believed in the desirability of their being adjusted to correspond to a tempered quarter-tone system, so that a kind of harmony may be imposed upon the music. He believed this compromise to be necessary so that new possibilities may be opened up and that the native music may 'progress' by accepting polyphony. He and many other musicians in the Middle East have regarded their monophonic musical traditions as intrinsically inferior. Their aim has been to admit the needed adjustments, to make possible the application of polyphony and harmony, on western models, in their own music.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the period between the two World Wars, Vaziri remained in a position of complete musical dominance, precisely because of his western education and outlook. He found many disciples among aspiring young musicians who fell under the spell of his powerful personality and his seeming musical authority. In time, his pupils, and their pupils in turn, became prominent musical figures in their own right. They have perpetuated Vaziri's thoughts and theories to this day.

Another window of exposure to western music was opened up also during the period between the two wars. This was through the increasing availability of gramophones and disc recordings. Recordings of western music, mostly dance music, were imported and gradually found a limited market. More importantly, from time to time, traditional musicians were invited to Europe by various record companies — recording facilities and press were not available in Persia at that time — in order to produce discs which were then sold in great numbers within the country. In the first instance, access to recordings of western light music made social dancing fashionable among the well-to-do. By the late 30' it was not uncommon for young men and women of the 'upper classes' to have dance-parties, when they would dance to waltzes, tangos, foxtrots, pasodobles and the like. In the second instance, the Persian musicians

<sup>9</sup> Vaziri assumes the neutral-tones to be multiples of 3 quarter-tones. In fact, these intervals are very unstable and tend to fluctuate, in one version, between 120 to 140 cents, and, in another version, between 160-180 cents.

<sup>10</sup> The theory of a 24 quarter-tone scale was also set forth for Arabian music by the Syrian musician, Mikhail Macshaqa, in the 19th century. Today, in Arab countries the quarter-tone is generally identified as the smallest intervalic unit in their music. This is in keeping with the desire to harmonise their music which is essentially modal with a multiplicity of interval sizes.

who travelled to Europe to make recordings came in contact with some western music. It is doubtful if these musicians ventured voluntarily to opera houses or symphony halls, but they did hear a good deal of light music in hotels, cafes and restaurants.

This exposure to western light music resulted in the emergence of a genre of vocal music, comparable to the chanson or the ballad of the prevalent European popular song tradition. Although the Persian counterpart, called '*tasnif*' or '*tarāné*', was composed in Persian modes, the musical forms (usually ABA or ABCA) were based on western models and, in some cases, a thin harmonic background was also provided. The ensembles accompanying the singer were usually a mixture of two or three native, plus a few western, instruments. For example, a typical ensemble may be composed of a *tār*, a bass *tār*, a tombak (goblet-shaped drum), a violin, a clarinet and a piano. In duration, also, these songs were modelled on western love-songs, usually 3 to 4 minutes long. This is a significant departure from the traditional Persian vocal music which tends to be much more rhapsodic and protracted.

The recordings of Persian traditional music (not the new westernised love-songs) instigated certain impositions on both their content and performance style. The fact that the old 78 RPM recordings could not contain more than five minutes of music on each side of the disc was a serious problem. A performance of any of the modal systems (*dastgāh*) of Persian music,<sup>11</sup> in its proper and authentic way, was very fluid. The performer improvised freely within the established norms resulting in a considerable variation in the length of one rendition as compared to another, of the same *dastgāh*, even by the same performer. Nevertheless, a meditative and expansive quality dominated each performance which rarely lasted less than 30 minutes. Now the mechanical limitations of 5, or at best 10 minutes of the two sides of the disc, had to be contended with. To continue a performance through several discs was clearly a poor solution, as such a procedure tends to be disruptive and unwieldy. In the case of western classical compositions such as operas, symphonies or concertos, there was no choice but to take the 'poor solution', as such compositions simply cannot be abbreviated. Given the pliability of Persian style of performance, however, the imposition of 5 or 10 minutes as the limit was implementable.

The practice of abridged renditions of the *dastgāhs* for the purposes of these recordings placed two serious constraints on the authenticity of the traditional music.

1. For the sake of brevity only a few of the many modes within the structure of each *dastgāh* could be included in a performance. Consequently the rendition of a *dastgāh* became more selective as to its component parts. Eventually some of the modes were permanently eliminated from the repertoire of an increasing number of musicians.
2. A generally faster pace was adopted so that more music could be included in a recording. This practice caused a distortion in the aesthetics of Persian music which emphasises the contemplative and mystical, not the exciting or virtuosic qualities.

In considering the sources of western musical influences between the two wars, the importance of cinema must not be overlooked. Films, first silents and then the 'talkies', were enormously effective in promoting interest in western music. Both the background music, so vital to the dramatic impact of the silent movies, and the musi-

<sup>11</sup> There are 12 modal groups (*dastgāh*) in Persian classical tradition, each of which is made of a sequence of modes with the opening mode in a position of dominance.

cals of the 30's were instrumental in creating a sense of familiarity with and enjoyment of western music.

The influence of imported recordings, and particularly the cinema, was essentially felt within the capital and other major urban centres. Most of the population at that time was rural. The most effective agent for the spread of musical interest throughout such a large country — three times the size of France — was the radio. The first radio transmitter was established in Tehran in 1939. This station's broadcasts, relayed throughout the land, included programmes devoted to traditional Persian music, light western music, as well as a limited amount of western classical music. The widest exposure to western music, by the nation at large, was thus provided by radio.

As concerns native music, the radio brought about new and far-reaching consequences. Many of the country's traditional musicians of distinction came to serve the newly found musical demands of *rādiō*. Composition of new songs for radio programmes proliferated, the standards were lowered and sheer imitations of western love-songs increased. A further imposition was the timing dictated by the general broadcasting policy, which set 15 or 30 minute limits on all programmes, be it music, news, plays or lectures. This was an improvement over the 10 minute limits of the two sides of a 78 RPM disc, but still was a confining element for a music which had never been bound to a predetermined duration.

The same period of between the two wars saw the coming to power of a new emperor, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty. This was Rezā Shah, a man of great vision and resolve. Like his contemporary, Ataturk of Turkey, Rezā Shah set about the modernisation and westernisation of his country. Great reforms were enacted in a swift and forceful manner, affecting all aspects of social life. In music, during the 30's the school founded some 70 years before was upgraded to an institution providing tuition in all western musical instruments, in theory and composition, and in history of music to students from secondary school through university level. By this time a number of Persians had attained high standing positions in various musical disciplines and were among the staff of this conservatory. A number of foreign teachers were also appointed mainly from Czechoslovakia and Italy. By the late 30's a small symphony orchestra was formed within the conservatory which gave occasional public concerts. In addition to this conservatory, the school founded by Vaziri in the 20's, now called the School of National Music, also flourished and received financial support from the Ministry of Culture and Arts. Near the end of his reign, Rezā Shah had commissioned the building of an opera house in Tehran. The building was left unfinished when the Allies invaded Persia in 1941 and forced the abdication of Rezā Shah in favour of his son and heir, Mohammad Rezā Shah.

In the 1940's the first Persian composer, in the truly western sense of the word, appeared on the scene. This was Parviz Mahmoud who had studied composition in Belgium and was a thoroughly Europeanised musician. During the mid and late 40' Mahmoud, and through him an even more committed western musical direction, became dominant. He worked closely with another western trained musician, Rubik Gregorian, a Persian-Armenian who was a gifted violinist. The two ran the Conservatory as director and deputy director, respectively. Mahmoud also conducted the symphony, now an orchestra of about 50 players, with Gregorian as the leader. In this period, Mahmoud composed a number of impressive orchestral pieces which attracted considerable attention. Particularly his violin concerto, utilising Persian folk themes, was enthusiastically received.

The three decades preceding the revolution witnessed an unprecedented flowering of musical activity, the stimulus for which was mainly from the west. An ever increasing number of Persians sought to study music abroad. By the 1970's, a large group of well-trained musicians were active in all areas of musical life. Among them there were accomplished pianists, violinists, singers, musicologists, conductors and composers. Various musical convictions were demonstrated by the works of Persian composers. There were those who worked with folk material, those who stayed with the main-stream European styles, and those who leaned in the direction of the avant-garde. Some had built a reputation abroad and were mainly active in Europe or in America. Most had returned home and worked as teachers, academics or state-supported composers.

The Tehran Symphony had developed into a very respectable orchestra capable of performing contemporary works, in addition to the standard classical and romantic repertoire. For a number of years Hešmat Sanjari, trained in Italy, was the TSO's conductor. In the 70's, Farhād Meškāt, a very gifted conductor with some fame in the west, took over and increased the size of the orchestra to 100 members. He had new works commissioned to be written by native composers which was a considerable incentive for the creation of new Persian symphonic music.<sup>12</sup>

By the 1970's Tehran had become a major stop on the itinerary of international performers and groups. Among the artists who visited Tehran for concerts: Isaac Stern, Eugene Istomin, Rudolf Baršhai, Arthur Rubinstein, Emil Gilels, Martha Argerich, Christian Ferras, The Juilliard String Quartet, Rudolf Nureyev, The Melos Ensemble, Yehudi Menuhin, Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and many others can be named.

There were a number of venues for recitals and concerts, but outstanding among them was the Rudaki Hall. Built in the 1960's, this is a medium-sized hall, with 1200 seats, fully equipped for opera productions, as well as suited to symphony concerts and recitals.<sup>13</sup> Tehran also had a very active opera company which produced at least a dozen operas per season, including operas written by native composers. There was also a ballet company and a folk-dance group, all supported and financed by the Ministry of Culture and Arts.

The first television transmitters were installed in Tehran in 1958. Later they were combined with radio into a huge network, called NIRT (National Iranian Radio and Television), which operated many stations throughout the country. A large number of musicians and musical ensembles, pertaining both to the national and the international musical types, were maintained by this organisation. Particularly significant was the NIRT Chamber Orchestra, a very proficient ensemble which gave concerts in Tehran and in the provincial capitals. This orchestra also went on occasional European tours and made a number of recordings.

Organised by the NIRT was a yearly international festival initiated in 1967. This was the Shirāz/Persepolis Festival, held, for a period of 10 days in late August, in the city of Shirāz and the close-by ancient ruins of Persepolis, the seat of the Persian Empire in the Achaemenian period (555 to 330 B.C.). Very quickly this festival had established an international prestige of the highest order. It was generously subsi-

<sup>12</sup> Foreign composers also received commissions. Among them was the Croatian composer Ivo Malec who wrote his *Tehrana* for the TSO in 1975.

<sup>13</sup> An extensive complex of concert halls and theatres was planned for Tehran, as a new Centre for Performing Arts, in the mid 70's. Its construction was begun but was halted after the revolution.

dised and chaired by the Empress. Musical and theatrical personalities and events of the first rank were brought to this festival. Great many artists of world fame came and gave concerts, commissions were given to composers and theatrical directors for new works, the world premieres for which were held at different sites in the beautiful city of Shiraz or amid the majestic ruins of Persepolis. Among composers commissioned to write new works for the festival: Luciano Berio, Bruno Maderna, John Cage and Iannis Xenakis can be named; other major contemporary composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki, Olivier Messiaen, Luis de Rablo, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Maurizio Kagel were present at concerts of their own music. On the whole, the festival pursued a policy of promoting the avant-garde tendencies both in music and in theatre, which created a good deal of controversy, adding to the excitement surrendering the events. This was a most impressive music and theatre festival the passing of which, due to anti-western policies of the present regime, is very regrettable.

In the area of musical training and education, not only were the Conservatory of Music and the School of National Music more than ever active, a Department of Music was also established at the University of Tehran. Modelled on music schools at American universities, this department offered a four year degree with the option of performance, composition, musicology or music education as a major. It also included a separate branch of Persian musical studies and performance. In 1974 a new university was created in Tehran, the Fārābi University, whose main thrust was study and research in humanities, music and the arts. Some of the provincial universities, e.g. those in Tabriz, Shirāz, Mašhad and Ahvāz, had begun introducing some music courses, such as music appreciation, into their curricula.

The same period of the last 30 years before the revolution represents the intense popularisation of western light music including jazz, Latin-American, Pop and Rock. Domestic products, in imitation of the western, flourished along with the imported. Many pop groups and singers came to prominence, performing in hotels and night-clubs which had mushroomed by mid-70's. The record and cassette industry produced and marketed both western type pop music and the hybrid songs which wedded Persian modes with western style and treatment.

This popular/commercial genre of music, more than any other type, has been spurned by the revolutionary regime, although the sedate traditional music was also, for a time, held in disfavour. In the first two years after the revolution, even all radio broadcasts were devoid of music of any kind. Soon, however, it was realised that a ban on music is simply unenforceable in today's society, and that a 24-hour radio broadcast with no music is not listened to. Evidently, the whole issue of the negation of music on religious grounds has been put to question and, no doubt, little justification has been found for a collective embargo. Nevertheless, pop music, both imported and domestic, is still officially rejected, as it is seen to be appealing to the basest emotions in the listener. One imagines that many who oppose in every way the present regime and its policies, in this instance, find themselves in sympathy with it.

In the area of authentic traditional music, after the initial set-backs, activity seems to be alive. Broadcasts of this type of music have resumed and concerts take place frequently. The work of the School of National Music was interrupted for a few years after the revolution; it is now back in operation.

The Conservatory of Music and the work of music departments at different universities were all brought to a close, but more recently they have been reopened on a more restricted basis. The Tehran Symphony, at first disbanded, is now operating in reduced size and in an inferior state. The opera and the ballet companies no longer exist.



It would be a fair assessment to state that the Islamic regime in Persia today, at best, tolerates musical activity; it certainly does not promote it. However it is obvious that the love of music, including the western types, is too deeply rooted for it to be effectively countered. Currently, private study of music in Persia is pursued at a rate far exceeding that of pre-revolution times. For example, the sale of pianos in the country has increased by many folds and piano teachers cannot cope with the demand on their time.

Clearly, Persia is today in a transitional state. A great upheaval has taken place and, even under the best of circumstances, a long time is required before sensible and balanced conditions can prevail. The fate of music, together with other cultural developments of the country, is directly linked with political events. There is no doubt, however, that music is there to stay, and the roots of western musical influences, for better or worse, are firmly in place.

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## POVZETEK

*Evropska potovanja perzijskega šaha Nāseraddina, ki je vladal od 1848 do 1896, so v začetku druge polovice 19. stoletja vzbudila zanimanje za zahodno glasbo. Za potrebe vojaške godbe so ustanovili glasbeno šolo, na kateri so poučevali francoski učitelji. Ob prelomu stoletja se je to zanimanje še povečalo; začeli so uvažati najrazličnejše glasbene instrumente in v modo je prišlo posnemanje skladb zahodne lahke glasbe. Prav tako so zahodna naziranja temperirane uglasitve in dur-molovskega sistema polagoma načela intervale in moduse perzijske glasbe. Osnovno enoglasje slednje so pričeli dopolnjevati nagibi k lahni harmonski fakturi.*

*Uveljavitev harmonskega sistema pa so ovirali tisti avtohtoni perzijski intervali, ki niso ustrezali temperiranim pol- in celim tonom. V dvajsetih letih je Ali Naqi Vaziri, sicer vplivna glasbena osebnost, skušal rešiti to vprašanje z lestvico štiriindvajsetih temperiranih četrttonov, s čimer je hotel omogočiti uporabo harmonije v okviru tradicionalne glasbe.*

*Trideseta leta predstavljajo obdobje intenzivne modernizacije, čas ustanovitve konservatorija po evropskih vzorih ter začetek delovanja Teheranskega simfoničnega orkestra. Po II. svetovni vojni se je vzorovanje po Zahodu še povečalo, tako na področju različnih glasbenih ustanov kot njih prizadevanj. Obstajala je že velika skupina na Zahodu šolanih izvajalcev, skladateljev in muzikologov; na vrsti univerz so odprli ustrezne glasbene oddelke; Teheranska filharmonija je začela naročati nova dela domačih skladateljev; ustanovljena je bila tudi opera ter nacionalni balet; vsako leto se je v Shirāzu (Persepolis) odvijal mednarodno ugledni glasbeni festival. Uveljavljeni svetovni umetniki in skupine so redno gostovali v Teheranu in drugih večjih središčih. Popularno-komercialna glasba zahodnih in domačih različic je bila na pohodu.*

*Z revolucijo v letih 1978-79 in s padcem monarhije je novi duhovniški red zavrl skoraj vsa glasbena prizadevanja. Vladavina današnje perzijske teokracije ima kaj malo razumevanja za glasbo; jo ali zaničuje ali vsaj sumniči. In vendar: podatki govore o tem, da je zanimanje za glasbo — vsaj v domačem krogu — takšno kot pred revolucijo. Zahodna glasba se je v Perziji pač zakoreninila, tako da je ne morejo pregnati nobene protizahodne tendence sedanjega režima.*