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A Post-Intercultural Path:
As wide as Persian music, jazz, and Western contemporary music

DISSERTATION

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Post-Intercultural Path:
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Doctor of Philosophy in Integrated Composition, Improvisation, and Technology
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This dissertation explores the musical and extramusical concepts shaping *Diaspersity*, a radio opera that I produced in order to reflect on my life as a bicultural immigrant who has been constantly struggling with identity complexities in the music making process. While in the past several decades many musicians have moved towards intercultural practices, in many cases these attempts turn into an unbalanced space where one musical culture appears as an exotic element within a dominant musical culture. I suggest taking a "post-intercultural" path, which can be divided into "post-inter" and "post-cultural". In a "post-inter" path, combining two musical cultures is neither the motivation nor the intention of a composer, but an organic personal quality based on the composer's experiences. The "post-cultural" path suggests that, while various musical cultures—which include different musical traditions—exist, culture is a personal concept in the process of a creative work. Based on my personal background and experiences, I concentrate on intercultural music that incorporates classical Persian music, jazz, and Western contemporary music. Therefore, I provide a historical and theoretical analysis of intercultural music practices in Iran and its diaspora. I also analyze the repertoire of classical Persian music and its application in various intercultural settings through studying works by Iranian-American musicians. Ultimately, I argue that achieving a liberating intercultural experience is a fluid process rather than a fixed musical practice.

Introduction

Diaspersity is a one-hour radio opera reflecting on my journey as a bicultural immigrant, bringing together works recorded by the Eclipse String Quartet, Sibarg Ensemble, and my own concrete music pieces. Throughout the work, listeners are reminded of several socio-political events that have affected many people's lives, including myself, and they are provided a space in which to internalize and critically think about the fundamental issues that can lead to such events. At times *Diaspersity* refers to the past or it creates a sonic space for the listener to imagine their own stories and elicit meaning from the music based on their own conceptions. *A post-intercultural path* is a phrase I coin to describe my intention to make music that is inherently intercultural and polystylistic without being labeled with such terms as "world music", "cross-cultural", "fusion", etc. Rather than introducing a new terminology or a new label, I conceptualize a post-intercultural path as a path to creating new opportunities for collaborations between musicians coming from different backgrounds without confronting deference to a specific tradition. Drawing from my personal background and my research on intercultural music practices, I discuss the motivation that led to the formation of this research. I contextualize the idea of taking a post-intercultural path for my creative work as a way to develop a more liberating intercultural collaboration.

A Note On Terminology

Before expanding on the topic, I would like to clarify how some of the terminologies are utilized in this written dissertation. Throughout this writing, I will use both Persian and Iranian in order to refer to the land, nation, and its cultural phenomena such as music and literature. As the

official name of the nation-state of Persia was changed to Iran in the mid-nineteenth century, today Iran predominantly refers to the nation-state while any of its cultural phenomena with roots in history are still referred to as Persian. Therefore, I will refer to people of Iran as Iranians while referring to its music and poetry as Persian. In the context of more modern music genres such as jazz and popular music, I will use Iranian since these styles of music are not rooted in the history of Iran. Also, when writing any Persian terms with English alphabets, I avoid using uppercase letters since in Persian writing there are no such differenciations as uppercase or lowercase. Lastly, the following table provides the correct pronunciation for English letters when used for writing Persian nouns, and terms (see fig. 1).

a	Sounds like how it is used in c**a**t
â	Similar to how “u” or “a” sounds in umbrella
e	Sounds like how it is used in p**e**t
i	Sounds like how it is used in **i**t
o	Sounds like how it is used in sh**o**w
u or **ou**	Similar to how “oo” is used in loop
g	Sounds like how it is used in **g**oat
gh or **q**	Sounds like the french “**r**”
s	Sounds like “ss” in press
sh	Sounds like how it is used in Engli**sh**
kh	Similar to how “j” in **j**uan is pronounced in Spanish

Fig. 1. Pronunciation guide.

Background

I started taking classical Persian vocal lessons when I was ten years old. After about one year, I was accepted into the Tehran Music Conservatory, a rigorous joint middle and high school music education program where I studied for six years prior to receiving a high school diploma

in Piano Performance and Composition. It was only after a few months of my studies there when my musicianship teacher, who was also a pianist, told me that singing classical Persian music is bad for my ears and I would not be able to improve my listening skills if I continue. Not knowing any better, I stopped attending my vocal lessons. It took me a year or two to find out about the tension between classical Persian music academics and those who studied Western music. I was also disappointed by the fact that generally students from richer families would play Western instruments and hang out together, while students from middle-class and low-income families would mostly play Persian instruments. I was one of the very few people in the school who had friends from both sides and was interested in learning more about both of these cultures. Once, while I was accompanying a violin student in his class, his violin teacher went off topic and blamed his student for hanging out with another student who played the oud, saying that that would negatively affect his intonation. In another example, in our introduction to classical Persian music class, whenever I asked the instructor any questions regarding the *radif*,[1] he would try to avoid any discussions by simply telling me to go and learn all the *radif* before asking any questions about it, because I was a piano performance major.

I could never stand such classifications and divisions. This is why I founded a mixed ensemble of Persian and European instruments, and named it Sibarg. The idea was to go beyond those historic classifications and compose original works that were suitable for all the instruments in the ensemble. We had a few concerts in Tehran, one of which was at the Conservatory, and we paid the price by receiving low grades in our performance classes by our teachers who didn't like to see such an ensemble on the stage playing music outside of their stylistic boxes. I moved to Armenia where a similar scenario was in place. During my time at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia, once my wonderful piano teacher told me

[1] The *radif* is the repertoire of classical Persian music, which will be discussed in chapter 2.

“Hesam, you were born and raised in Tehran. While you are smart and work hard, you won’t be able to compete with top pianists who are raised with European culture, so your piano playing will always have a Persian accent.” While his comment can be debated, it made me think more deeply about what I want to do with music and figure out what is my intention of practicing music. This is why, when I moved to the USA, I decided to focus on composition and try to find my own voice so that I won’t be the person from the “other land” with an accent. My interest in bringing the two musical traditions that I was studying escalated more and more. Gradually I became more interested in jazz and Western contemporary music. I was also introduced to Professor Hossein Omoumi’s method of teaching the *radif*, which I found welcoming for someone with a similar background to mine, and also highly effective in general.

During my time at UC San Diego as an undergraduate student in music composition, I reformed Sibarg Ensemble by inviting musicians from various backgrounds to collaborate. Meanwhile, I started to realize how focusing on a fixed identity may be the main cause of the issues that I have been experiencing, which might be the result of consumerism and profitable strategies practiced by corporations. Similarly, it seemed to be an issue caused by the fight to gain power or in some cases the struggle to preserve what is left from diminished ideologies or traditions. While I was welcomed and taken seriously at UC San Diego, I still was identified as Hesam who sings Pesian music and is interested in Persian music and composes based on Persian music. However, I was aiming to draw on my personal experience in order to create a space through my creative work, which would liberate my music from promoting any fixed identities.

Intercultural Music

Several terms have been used in order to describe a musical work that includes qualities and elements of two or more musical cultures. Among these terms, "cross-cultural" and "intercultural" seem to be more popular within academia. Compared to the term "world music", which has been used for commercializing merchandised musical works, cross-cultural and intercultural carry more academic *gravitas* and also include the word "culture", which is essential to the field. Raymond Williams uses three categories to define culture: "'ideal', in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values" (Williams 48), "'documentary', which refers to documentation of body of intellectual and imaginative works in various forms", and "social" definition of culture that reflects on norms of all kinds in a human's life (Williams 48). All these three categories indicate how culture is related to human activity and cannot be separated from it. Williams' effort to define culture clearly shows the complexity of this subject. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, I focus on what culture refers to in an intercultural context, which allows me to define what intercultural music means in my own work.

The term "musical culture" refers to a "set of spiritual values derived from the various forms of musical knowledge and activity: listening - creation - interpretation" (Munteanu 4195). It also has a historical value, as it is a heritage transmitted from generation to generation while evolving based on various factors. The historical side of musical culture creates musical traditions, which then creates material for education. When entering a music class or conservatory, one has committed to learn a musical tradition. Whether it is classical Persian music, jazz, or Western classical music, it is mainly that tradition which is taught to the student, among other subjects. This is why musical traditions are sets of rules that objectify music based

on previous studies. If one tries to change these rules, then the outcome won't be traditional anymore. However, musical culture refers to both subjectivity and objectivity of one music. Moreover, in this paper I refer to musical culture as a broader umbrella that includes both creativity and tradition in one way or another.

The traditional aspect of classical Persian music is in its repertoire and the way it is transmitted to the next generation. The *radif* includes a number of melodies which are grouped in twelve modal systems. These melodies are created based on different tetrachords and pentachords. Some of them are tied to specific poetic rhythms, and/or follow particular melodies. In other words, by learning the *radif* one is expected to learn the rules of how various "traditional melodic patterns" can be put together without disregarding the tradition (Omoumi, "Analysis of Radif"). Yet, it is interesting to observe the evolution of this tradition since it has been recorded. By comparing various musicians based on their historical and social situation, we can see how the "musical culture" of different moments in history shapes the perception of the musical tradition. We see how a musical culture is perceived differently by each musician. In order to explain the main reason behind this, we need to look into how musical culture works in a society.

We can think of culture as a large system that has several subsystems. Normally the term subculture refers to a smaller cultural group setting up their beliefs and interests different from the larger culture that they belong to. Here, I refer to the subsystems of the large system of culture, sub-cultures, which still may follow the same ideas, beliefs, and practice the same traditions while having their differences. These sub-cultures also consist of several other sub-cultures (subsystems). Unlike a social group, people who are associated with these sub-cultures collaborate together, and they are the smallest yet most determinative subsystem of these systems. Imagine a society that includes several different cultural groups, which have

several sub-cultural groups. People associated with these different groups are not isolated. They observe the other cultural groups and start listening, learning, imitating, creating, and interpreting based on their own understanding. Not only do various cultural groups affect one another, but also within each cultural group, each individual and how they perceive that culture varies. This is why musical culture can be seen both as an umbrella term connecting various people sharing similar understandings and practices, as well as a personal term that refers to how an individual perceives and processes music.

On the other hand, "inter" as a prefix has two meanings: 1) between; among; and 2) mutually; reciprocally (Inter- English Definition and Meaning). Therefore intercultural seems to be a more preferable term compared to cross-cultural, which emphasizes the idea of two distinct cultures meeting or someone crossing both. In this dissertation, I refer to intercultural music as a practice that aims to introduce new possibilities through utilizing two or more musical cultures.

A Post-Intercultural Path

The term post-intercultural can be divided into "post-inter" and "post-cultural". 'Post-inter' refers to moving from the idea of combining two or more musical cultures, and post-cultural refers to thinking about culture as a personal perception.

The combination of two or more musical cultures is an interesting yet challenging undertaking. In many cases it can result in an unbalanced space where one musical culture appears as an exotic element within a dominant musical culture. This is why I suggest taking a *post-inter* path, in which combining two musical cultures is neither the motivation nor the intention, but is simply an immanent characteristic of the music's practitioners. Another issue with intercultural music making has been centered around satisfying certain traditions of those

cultures. In an article by Chris Adler,[2] and in my conversation with Reza Vali,[3] I realized how both of these composers try to express how their music is culturally related to Thai classical music and classical Persian music, respectively, when unfolding the extra-musical aspects of their works.[4] If satisfying various cultures becomes the musician's intention, respecting a musical tradition gives its place to obeying the tradition—whatever it means—and that turns to be a determinative part of the creative process. The question here is, would it be possible to satisfy two musical traditions, which initially means convincing people of the validity of combining those traditions. In order to answer this question, I want to go one step back to the very first step: Why does a musician need to base the creative work on satisfying a person or a group of people?

I believe satisfying a fixed identity that arises from a tradition is not possible in an intercultural setting. As soon as a tradition is combined with another, they necessarily are changed, and what remains is the creator's perception of those two musical cultures. This conversation only exists because we tend to put traditions first, and we forget that "it is people who make traditions and not the other way around (Modirzadeh 256)." As mentioned earlier, traditions are the source of most education. I hear many masters of classical Persian music mentioning how the *radif* is the root of the plant—here the plant refers to a musician. It must be learned and understood, as we will be fed from it, and until we have it all, there will be no fruits. While this is a clever metaphor, there is a missing aspect of it, and that is the "fruit". While in the tradition it is highly suggested to keep the traditional melodic patterns similar to the ones learned from the *radif*, the fruit of a plant has very little similarity to its roots; it differs in its shape,

[2] See Adler.
[3] I had a conversation with Iranian-American composer Reza Vali in April 2020. Reza Vali talked about the philosophy behind his compositions, his software *Arghanoon*, his background in music, and his pieces that are based on classical and folkloric Persian music.
[4] It should be noted that it is infeasible to give a detailed analysis of a musical work without talking about the roots of its elements. However, when discussing its extra-musical background, we are focusing on the intentions of that work.

color, taste, and its application. However, similar to a creative work of music, if one analyzes the DNA of a fruit and compares it to that of the root of the plant, there will be some similarities between the two. This is exactly what a *post-cultural* path suggests: while various musical cultures—which include different musical traditions—exist, in the process of making a new creative work culture is indeed a very personal concept. For the most part, intercultural music has been focused on the idea of bringing two or more (larger) musical cultures together. Unless one considers culture as a personal perception, though, most of the outcomes of such collaborations "simply perpetuate an exotica syndrome—strengthening hegemony by absorbing its colonizing effects into a compromised expression" (Modirzadeh 255).

Modirzadeh refers to how an intercultural collaboration may turn into an exotic expression as a result of unbalanced power dynamics. Although discussing this concept in detail is out of the scope of this project, through providing a historical perspective on intercultural music practices in Iran, I briefly discuss the cultural and social effects of colonial and post-colonial exploitation. At the same time, "perpetuating an exotica syndrome" may also lead to creating and promoting a fixed identity, in which the dominant musical culture would be the product. In this layout, as the result of an unbalanced collaboration, different musical cultures would end up being identified as separate identities. However, an inherently intercultural collaboration should create possibilities for "becoming" as opposed to identifying.

The concept of *becoming* originated in ancient Greek philosophy, and reflects on the possibility of change in any phenomenon that has being and exists. Rather than focusing on the being of a thing, becoming is centered on dynamic evolution and the possibility of what a thing can become. When contextualizing the meaning of culture based on Williams' definition of the term in relation to the idea of becoming, a post-cultural path suggests moving from identifying

the being towards the possibility of what it can become. Therefore, in a post-intercultural path, I strive to explore a more dynamic intercultural music practice in which the process of creation and collaboration are the core of the project. So the outcome would be a fluid sonic space that doesn't represent a fixed identity while providing the listener with the possibility for imagining new sonic cultures in which the existing musical cultures are also embedded. Based on this intention, as soon as one fixes their creative works on a specific musical practice, a new fixed identity is formed and the process gives its place to produce. This is similar to the concept of *narrative identity*,[5] which "firmly rejects the tendencies of identity theories to normatize new categories that are themselves as fixed as their classical predecessors" (Somers and Gibson 34). Therefore, in my creative works and with the Sibarg Ensemble, I have been always endeavoring to explore new possibilities rather than creating a fixed musical practice or language.

Moving along a post-intercultural path, *Diaspersity* exemplifies how a creative project can be shaped around the idea of becoming and focusing on the process. Also the listener is invited into a sonic space that allows them to take a part in the conceptualization of the story, despite their understanding of the musical cultures that has been utilized in the work. Additionally, my polystylistic approach allows me to criticize the existing intercultural music practices which are formed within a specific style. In order to allow for creating a liberating intercultural experience, I suggest moving away from forming the creative process within a particular style. Rather, I strive to explore the possibilities that various styles and traditions may provide for deconstructing fixed identities. Therefore, *Diaspersity* consists of fully notated compositions, music written for improvisers, and computer music, all of which become a space for collaboration, as well as a form for delivering my musical thoughts to my collaborators and

[5] See Somers and Gibson.

listeners. My polystylistic approach along with my effort to avoid creating a fixed musical practice, are the two strategies that distinguish my creative work from those that I will be discussing as intercultural music practices that have influenced my research.

One may suggest using original terminologies for explaining all of the above, but here what is at stake is raising the awareness about this particular area of study. Maybe a few decades ago the idea of intersecting two musical cultures was a suitable way to bring people from different cultures and beliefs together and promote diversity, regardless of how successful it was and how different industrial systems and musicians processed it. But as I will discuss this further in chapter one, that time has largely passed and we are living in a world in which interculturality is always part of people's lives. Culture is becoming much more personal and sub-cultures are expanding. People have shared-values while coming from various sub-cultures. And ultimately, cultural hegemony is being more strongly and consciously criticized. An Iranian musician shouldn't be obligated to know classical Persian music or even relate to it based on their nationality, race, and ethnicity, any more or less than an American musician. A post-intercultural path is an approach to criticizing where intercultural music has been moving, while suggesting to focus on the personal intentions and stories. In an intercultural music collaboration the focus should not be on the tools one uses for creative works. Here the tools don't only refer to musical elements such as melody, rhythm, harmony, texture, timbre, etc., but also embrace the use of different cultures or traditions.

It is difficult to let go of a tradition or a mindset that you have been holding so dearly, whether it is European contemporary music or classical Persian music. But a genuine intercultural creation may only exist when the intention is to create a work that defines one's personal perception of musical culture. The majority of academic programs are centered around a

musical tradition, and students' creative works are only delineated within that tradition. If you are in a composition program, you are there to become a composer of a certain tradition, despite your personal story. In such programs, it's not one's personal story that shapes his or her creative work, but it is the tradition that redefines one's personal story and shapes the creative work. This view quickly gives birth to cultural hegemony: you are either from us or you are the "other". The idea of a post-intercultural path was formed in my mind since I have been actively participating in academia while simultaneously working on a project with Prof. Hossein Omoumi at UC Irvine. The project focuses on introducing a new pedagogical system to teach classical Persian music to beginners. *Pish-Radif* (literary pre *radif*) lessons are the outcome of this project. For me as a musician, finding innovative ways of teaching music is always an appealing research, but what I am more interested in is the application of these theories in a creative process. In a post-intercultural path, while various musical cultures and traditions are respected, the idea is not to create a work that represents a certain music culture or a tradition. The intention is to personalize these cultures and express each individual's perception of musical culture.

The idea of taking a post-intercultural path aims to point out the existing issues in the current intercultural music practices and discuss ways which may lead to a more liberating intercultural experience at large. Because of my personal background, this creative/research dissertation focuses on how an intercultural musical dialogue can be shaped between Persian music, jazz, and Western contemporary music. Therefore, in chapter 1 after providing a brief history of intercultural music making, I focus on its history in Iran. Through historical and social analysis I discuss the difference between intercultural collaborations that lead to promoting inclusiveness as opposed to perpetuating hegemony.

In chapter 2 I provide a detailed analysis of classical Persian music, which is the least known musical tradition among the ones that influences my research. Thereafter, I discuss three various musical practices established and developed by Reza Vali, Hafez Modirzadeh, and Shahrokh Yadegari, whose works utilizes Persian music in an intercultural context. Ultimately, this chapter responds to the question of: "how do their working methods relate to the notion of taking a post-intercultural path that I have outlined here?"

In Chapter 3 I expand on the idea of a post-intercultural path and discuss the musical and extramusical details of *Diaspersity* as an example. Throughout this chapter the reader learns about the role of composition, improvisation, and technology in navigating my creative work towards a post-intercultural path. I strive to conclude this chapter with clarifying the concept of becoming in an intercultural musical setting, and expand on the idea of avoiding fixed identities.

Finally, in Chapter 4 through introducing two possible research projects that I have been shaping inspired by this dissertation, I conclude the written portion of my dissertation.

Chapter 1: Intercultural music collaborations

Introduction

Intercultural music making has always been a part of music practice, and has resulted in transforming musical traditions as well as creating new aesthetics. Through organological and musicological studies, we can trace how various musical traditions have influenced one another. In fact, the travel of instruments from one region to another and their history of evolution is an example of early intercultural collaboration. Although musical traditions have traveled around the world throughout history, in the ancient times philosophers and historians wrote predominantly about their own region's music theory and history (Rice 12). The ethnomusicology that we know of today as a field that studies music of other cultures has strong roots in colonialism and imperialism (Rice 18). The rise of nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe played an important role in the evolution of ethnomusicology. European musicians started to collect folkloric music and songs of their own lands; musicians like Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) and Béla Bartók (1881–1945) are the most renowned examples of this movement, who also integrated these folk songs into their works. On the other hand, starting in the seventeenth century we can find writings by European theorists and musicologists on music of other cultures, and in the late eighteenth century comparative musicology, as a subfield of musicology, began to be seen as a field for studying and comparing music of various regions of the world. In 1950, the term *ethnomusicology* was coined by Jaap Kunst, and other comparative musicologists picked up Kunst's suggestion (Rice 20; cf. Lukaniuk 129).[6]

[6] See "On the History of the Term 'Ethnomusicology'" by Bohdan Lukaniuk.

Since then, ethnomusicology has been considered by many to be a separate field, and musicology kept its focus on stories of Western music. Although the idea of promoting ethnomusicology in academia as a field of study is a liberating one, the fact that any music other than Western classical music is studied under this title enforces the discursive othering of every other music in the world. In the late 1960s, the term *world music* was introduced by academicians as a more populist equivalent term for ethnomusicology, one which could receive more attention from the society at large and help with the expansion of the field. On the other hand, the use of this term created more tension in academia, especially because world music referred to music of non-Western culture whereas Western music was referred to simply as music (Feld 146). Soon after, world music became a genre within the music industry and moved towards popular culture, representing commercial music that included elements of non-Western music cultures. In parallel, the growth of cross-cultural studies and the need of creating conversations between cultures was recognized more than ever. This is why in the 1980s we see a shift in ethnomusicology and while "early ethnomusicology championed the study of supposedly older, 'authentic' forms of traditional world music uncontaminated by modern life, mature ethnomusicology, since 1978 or so, has moved enthusiastically toward the study of urban, popular, and hybrid forms of music" (Rice 24). This is how the term cross-cultural became more popular among academics to label music that mixes two or more cultures. Today, more scholars and artists refer to such a practice using the term intercultural because of its literal meaning, as discussed in the Introduction.

The studies of world music, especially in the late twentieth century, encouraged music practitioners to get involved in more intercultural collaborations. These studies, combined with more availability of recordings, made exposure to other musical cultures more accessible for

musicians around the globe. The rise of technology and the expansion of its accessibility created new possibilities for intercultural collaborations. In academia, however, the gap between world music studies and Western music became more tangible, yet I see a growing desire to utilize elements of other cultures in the music making process of composers and improvisers. Still today, we are witnessing the dominance of Western European music in the Western academic settings and its effects on music education elsewhere.[7] Through looking into the curriculum used in the Tehran Music Conservatory for their Persian Music Performance degree,[8] one can see the unbalanced weight given to the number of classes offered related to Persian music versus those focused on Western classical music. In the last three years of the program, only eleven of twenty-nine music courses are related to Persian music studies (see fig. 2). Interestingly, all the musicianship and ear training courses follow the tonal tradition while Persian music uses a different intonation and tuning systems (Tehran Music Boys' School). Meanwhile, with its recognition worldwide, jazz has become a space for many musicians to freely experience intercultural collaborations without giving deference to specific classical traditions.

[7] See Matthew K. Carter's piece, "Are Popular Music Curricula Antiracist?: The CCNY Music Department as a Case Study," and M. Leslie Santana's piece, "Whose History?: The Americas and Music Curricula in the United States."

[8] Tehran Music Conservatory offers a joint middle and high school music education program, as well as bachelor and Masters degrees in music. After the 1979 revolution the boys and girls schools were divided.

ردیف	سال اول						سال دوم						سال سوم					
	نام درس	واحد			ساعت		نام درس	واحد			ساعت		نام درس	واحد			ساعت	
		نظری	عملی	جمع	عملی	جمع		نظری	عملی	جمع	عملی	جمع		نظری	عملی	جمع	عملی	جمع
۱	تعلیمات دینی و قرآن (۱)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	تعلیمات دینی و قرآن (۲)	۱	-	۱	-	۱	تعلیمات دینی و قرآن (۳)	۱	-	۱	-	۱
۲	عربی (۱)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	عربی (۲/۱)	۱	-	۱	-	۱	عربی (۲/۲)	۱	-	۱	-	۱
۳	زبان خارجه (۱)	۳	-	۳	-	۳	ادبیات فارسی (۲)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	تاریخ معاصر ایران	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۴	زبان فارسی (۱)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	زبان فارسی (۲)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	مطالعات اجتماعی	۳	-	۳	-	۳
۵	ادبیات فارسی (۱)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	تربیت بدنی (۲)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲	کشتی پاتکدر	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۶	تربیت بدنی (۱)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲	زبان خارجه (۲)	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	سکتبطی ایرانی	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۷	ریاضی (۱)	۴	-	۴	-	۴	سکتبطی جهانی (۱)	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	سکتبطی جهانی (۲)	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۸	آمادگی نقاشی	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	همراهی ساز با آواز ایرانی (۱)	-	۱	۱	-	۲	همراهی ساز با آواز ایرانی (۲)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲
۹	موسیقی فیزیک صوت و آزمایشگاه	۲	۱	۳	۲	۴	هماهنگی عمومی (۱)	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	هماهنگی عمومی (۲)	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۱۰	موسیقی نظری و ساختار موسیقی ایرانی	۲	-	۲	-	۲	ساختار موسیقی جهانی (۱)	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	ساختار موسیقی جهانی (۲)	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۱۱	تاریخ موسیقی جهانی (۱)	۲	-	۲	-	۲	تاریخ موسیقی جهانی (۲)	۲	-	۲	۲	۲	تاریخ موسیقی ایرانی	۲	-	۲	-	۲
۱۲	سرایش تربیت و تکنیک آوایی (۱)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲	سرایش تربیت و تکنیک آوایی (۲)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲	سرایش تربیت و تکنیک آوایی (۳)	-	۱	۱	۲	۲
۱۳	ساز تخصصی ایرانی (۱)	-	۲	۲	-	۳	ساز تخصصی ایرانی (۲)	-	۲	۲	۴	۴	ساز تخصصی ایرانی (۳)	-	۲	۲	۴	۴
۱۴	ساز دوم (۱)	-	۱	۱	-	۲	ساز دوم (۲)	-	۲	۲	۳	۳	ساز دوم (۳)	-	۲	۲	۳	۳
۱۵	آواز گروهی (۱)	-	۱	۱	-	۲	آواز گروهی (۲)	-	۲	۲	۳	۳	آواز گروهی (۳)	-	۲	۲	۳	۴
۱۶	گروه توازی - ارکستر موسیقی ملی (۱)	-	۱	۱	۳	۳	گروه توازی - ارکستر موسیقی ملی (۲)	-	۲	۲	۴	۴	گروه توازی - ارکستر موسیقی ملی (۳)	-	۲	۲	۴	۴
۱۷							جغرافیای عمومی و استان	۲	-	۲	۲	۲						
	جمع	۲۵	۸	۳۳	۱۶	۴۰	جمع	۱۱	۱۱	۲۲	۲۰	۴۰	جمع	۲۱	۱۰	۳۱	۱۹	۴۰

Fig. 2. The curriculum of classes offered at the Tehran Music Conservatory during the three years of high school.

In this chapter, I will focus on the history of intercultural music making in Iran and within the Iranian diaspora. Since the intercultural music practices known as *musighi-e talfighi* (fusion music) was mainly introduced to Iranians through the arrival of jazz in the 1960s and ’70s, I will also give a historical description of jazz in Iran. I will briefly discuss intercultural collaborations between Iranian musicians and those from other Eastern countries, as such collaborations have been less common or have been practiced within larger projects that have emerged from Western musical aesthetics. We can trace the history of intercultural music making in Iran and its diaspora through the study of improvised music and fully notated music. Works that are based on improvisation are the ones tied into jazz and in some cases to other African or Eastern traditions, and those based on fully notated music are influenced by Western classical and contemporary music. This is why I will also focus on Western contemporary music-influenced intercultural collaborations in Iran. Both my research and my creative work are focused on intercultural music making as wide as Persian music, jazz, and Western contemporary music.

Based on these histories and through examining the extramusical concepts found in such intercultural collaborations, I will discuss the evident intention behind these collaborations in Iran and compare it with its equivalent in the Iranian diaspora. In this path, I will explain the difference between modernization and inclusiveness, and how these two may cross one another in intercultural collaborations that involve musicians from the Iranian diaspora at large.

Intercultural Music in Iran: A brief history

Intercultural collaboration in music has a long history in Iran, and there are several articles written about music after Islam in the Ottoman Empire and India, which highlight such desires.[9] Classical Persian music has been influenced by its neighboring countries, while folkloric music of different regions in Iran have even more tangible connections with their neighboring countries. This is because the same ethnic groups live across national borders and share the same language, dialect, and cultural values. On the other hand, one can trace intercultural music collaboration between Iranian and Western musicians through the history of the recording industry. Besides replacing Persian instruments with their Western counterparts—e.g. replacing kamāncheh with violin, or ney with clarinet—that can be found in the early recordings from 1909 onwards, there are some later recordings that can be the seen as the earliest intercultural music collaboration between Western and Persian music in which musical elements of both cultures are used in the composition of a song. *Hedieh Khak* (gift of dust), is a *tasnif* (song), composed and sung by Iranian musician Seyed Javad Badeezadeh, recorded in Tehran, Iran in 1933-34.[10] This song mixes Persian and Western instruments as well as using a slow waltz form, while its melodic structure leans more towards classical Persian

[9] See Sepanta and Wright.
[10] I was permitted access to the recording of this song and its cover through my friend, Amir Ali Ardekanian.

music (see fig. 3). However, until the mid 1950s, most of these intercultural projects were heavily influenced by Western music and European popular music to be more specific. These works sound similar to European pop songs but with lyrics in Persian and in some cases with melodies that include little Persian music flavor.



Fig. 3. This is the disc for *Hedieh Khak* (gift of dust), from Amirali Ardekanian's personal collection.

The broadcast of the Golha (flowers) radio program on the Iranian Radio in 1956 marks a significant moment in Persian music history, and also affected the intercultural music collaborations. Although the main aim of the program was to promote Persian music and poetry, use of Western instruments in music production was already part of Iran's culture, and Golha established its own orchestra, which combined Western and Persian instruments. The orchestra played classical Persian music pieces that included intervals not used in Western music as well as pieces composed for a Western orchestra. The theme song of several of Golha episodes was a classical Persian music-based melody played by Muhammad Shir-Khuda'i on clarinet. Shir-Khuda'i played intervals that are found in classical Persian music, and the timbre of his playing also had a Persian influence. Interestingly, in the same program one hears the sound of ney; such integrations made this radio program unique. In each episode of Golha's programming, one could hear different ways of fusing Persian and Western music.

It was only a few years later that jazz and rock and roll found their ways to Iran and brought more intercultural collaboration opportunities with them. At the same time, classically trained Iranian composers started to use elements of Persian music in their compositions, and gradually more musicians became interested in the idea of intercultural collaboration. The Shiraz Art Festival that brought musicians and artists together from all over the world played an important role. However, upon the Islamic revolution in 1979, many musicians were forced to leave the country. That was a significant moment in the modern history of Persian music, and resulted in expansion of intercultural dialogue. Most of the active Iranian musicians were outside of the country, interacting with other musicians from around the world, performing for new audiences who didn't necessarily have the Persian cultural background and who perceived the music differently. The growing number of Iranian musicians immigrating from Iran to continue their music education or live abroad, especially in the last two decades, is an important factor in the formation of intercultural dialogues between Iranians and other musicians. Finally, the 1997 presidential election in Iran that led to the presidency of Mohammad Khatami opened the doors to more intercultural collaborations through several international conferences and festivals that were permitted to be held in Iran because of his more liberal views.

Arrival of Jazz in Iran

During the 1960s and '70s the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (r. 1941-1979), who was interested in modernizing Iran through Westernisation, enforced policies in order to transform Iran to an industrial and capitalist nation in a secular form. In a short video, which is a recording of a meeting regarding the cultural events, we see Farah Pahlavi—the Shah's wife, who had a major role on promoting culture and arts of any kind in the Shah's regime—trying to express the

importance of classical Persian music and poetry, while the Shah aggressively disagrees with her views.[11] While Farah Pahlavi pushed for celebrating Persian arts and culture by supporting and funding several programs such as the Shiraz Art Festival and the Center for Preservation and Propagation of Persian Music, the majority of cultural support went towards commercialization of Western cultural concepts and arts. This is when Western popular music was adopted by many Iranian musicians and found its way to Iranian National Radio and Television (INRT) and became the main musical product that was available to the Iranian society. Iranian pop stars in the 1960s and '70s started their appearance by covering popular music produced in Britain and America and quickly started writing their own songs and created the Persian pop scene. At the same time, jazz music was also introduced to Iranian audiences through several American jazz musicians who traveled to Iran, some of whom collaborated with traditional Iranian instrumentalists.

In 1963, during his Asia tour, Duke Ellington performed in Abâdân and Isfahân and three years later in his 'Far East Suit' he included a track named 'Isfahan' with a lyrical saxophone line throughout the piece (see fig. 4). A few years later, in 1969, Max Roach was invited to the Shiraz Arts Festival and performed with his quintet. During the festival he did an impromptu jam session with the tombak master Hossein Tehrani (Shahbanoo, 01:46:41 - 01:47:13). Perhaps, Lloyd Miller was the most active jazz musician in Iran before the revolution. In the early 1970s, he hosted a weekly evening Iranian television program and recorded an album titled *Oriental Jazz*, featuring American jazz musicians side by side with traditional Persian instrumentalists. Kourosh Ali Khan was a name that Miller used for himself while he hosted his television show.

[11] The meeting seems to be an important cabinet meeting with many officials participating. Farah says "not all of our music and poetry is bad." Then the shah gets angry and replies: "It's none of my business… I don't want to say all of it is bad, but while we are proud of this culture, at the same time our country was occupied by foreigners. With what instrument did we go to the war (he moves his hand as if he is playing the *târ*). It seems like he is not seeing any interesting outcome from Persian traditional music.

In one of the programs he introduces his music as “Iranian music and instruments together with jazz… In other words, put together but not mixed” (Nikzad, 00:07:53 - 00:08:06). As Miller had a lot of respect for his first santur teacher, Dariush Safvat (1928-2013)—who was also the director of the Center for Preservation and Propagation of Persian Music—it is not surprising to think of his statement more as a way to satisfy his mentor, who was against using Persian music and instruments in any forms other than its traditional way.



Fig. 4. Ticket for Duke Ellington’s Abadan concert in 1963.

Even though Iran was never colonized by any Western country, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi’s regime quickly became the Western European countries’ and the United States’ fresh market, both industrial and cultural, as well as an oil provider site and a great ally to monitor all the changes in the region—which until today has been the main foreign policy struggle for Western governments. It was through the oil industry that jazz musicians traveled to Iran and performed in the clubs, especially in the Khuzestan province—the land of oil in Iran—where foreign oil industry workers resided (Sadighi and Mahdavi 2009). Soon after, local musicians started to create jazz bands. As Laudan Nooshin wrote “Armenian musicians such as the brothers Hovik and Rafik Davudian and pianist Aram Stepanian were particularly active in the small jazz scene, which consisted largely of performances in chic hotel lobbies or nightclubs rather than

formal concerts" (126). It must be noted that in Persian jazz is pronounced as *Jâz* and refers to the drum set, because the primary instrument in jazz from the viewpoint of Iranians was the drum set. This is another sign that indicates the lack of information on jazz music in the society during its early years in Iran. In fact one of the early Persian pop singers, Viguen (1929-2003) was known as *Soltan-e Jâz* (Sultan of Jazz), and many believe it was because he was among the first pop singers in Iran to perform with a drummer in his band in the clubs. He was also the first singer who sang folkloric songs using a pop music band setting which made his music different from the other pop singers at the time. Viguen was also an Iranian-Armenian musician and when researching jazz in Iran before 1979, one will realize how Armenian musicians were the majority of musicians forming the jazz scene in Iran. Even the jazz orchestra of NIRT was directed by an Armenian musician, Marcel Estepanian (Nooshin 127). Although there had been some significant jazz performances in Iran before the Islamic revolution of 1979, jazz had associations with intellectualism and modernity and failed to reach a level of popularity parallel to Persian pop music or even Western rock.

Jazz in Iran: After 1979

As the Shah continued to force pro-western policies influenced by the British and the United States and show off his extravagant wealth and decadent lifestyle, he lost the support of his people who were dissatisfied by the socioeconomic conditions and lack of representation. The idea of an independent nation has had a long history in Iran and as the Shah started to be seen as the puppet of Britain and the United States, the revolution eventually succeeded in 1979. National identity was one of the lost concepts that was brought back to the nation followed by the revolution. I will discuss the importance of this concept in relation to jazz as we get to the

twenty-first century. Since the revolution was led by religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini, Islamic laws combined with de-westernizing and anti-imperialist beliefs deconstructed all of the political, economical, and cultural systems of the country. These changes heavily affected the music scene in Iran for many years as the position of music in society was and still is ambiguous between the religious leaders. After a few months to a year of complete shutdown of music in society and the national radio and television (except for revolutionary and religious music), only Persian music was broadcast for many years with several limitations (Youssefzadeh 57). During that time, all of the young classical Persian music artists started to produce music in support of the revolution, and during the bloody Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), as expected, ensembles such as *Âref* and *Sheydâ*, produced many masterpieces to celebrate the Iranian soldiers fighting for their land. The Tehran Symphony Orchestra was shut down by the revolutionary guard for over 6 years, and only music that would serve "the Iranian people" and the "Islamic Revolution" was allowed. For the religious leaders, pop music was the symbol of *gharb zadegi* (Westernization) and was tied to the Pahlavi's regime. In their eyes pop music not only promoted crooked aspects of Western culture, but it could persuade people to think or do something against the Islamic laws or *gonâh* (sin). Dancing in public and drinking alcohol was part of the night clubs and pop music concert traditions, and music could promote all these sins (Youssefzadeh 39).

In 1989 following Ayatollah Khomeini's death, Ayatollah Khâmene'i came into power. After a radical revolution followed by an unfair war between Iran and Iraq supported by Western powers, Iranians needed a fresh start and people sought for some social and cultural reforms. As Youssefzadeh mentions: "In the wake of the campaign launched in 1992 by Ayatollah Khamene'i against the 'cultural aggression of the West' (*tahâjom-e farhangi-e gharb*), traditional Persian music recovered a certain legitimacy" (39). A few years later, When Mohammad Khatami won

the presidential election of 1997, he claimed victory with an overwhelming 70% of the popular vote in a year with an unprecedented 80% voter turnout. Khatami established himself as a populist through his reformist agenda—an agenda that included the promotion of Iranian constitutionalism, freedom of press and religion, and liberalization for the arts. Khatami had previously served as the minister of culture, but was forced to resign in 1992 for relaxing such restrictions—*tahâjom-e farhangi-e gharb*, as mentioned above. His presidential election marked a new era, particularly in the music scene. When Khatami's reforms began to take effect, many of the cultural restrictions started to dissipate, and jazz could function as more than an underground interest. As a result, the late 1990s and early 2000s began to see the development of an unprecedented Iranian jazz scene.

In the Islamic Republic, musicians' works have to go through an arduous screening process before publication or performance approval. If a musician or band wants to perform for the first time, the process of obtaining a permit can take between one to two months.

> After the musician finds an appropriate venue and signs a contract, they need to submit that contract as well as a video recording of the complete ensemble performing the intended music to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. If it's a band applying for a permit, they must choose an original name. There is also an additional form which asks for information such as genre, text/lyrics, instrumentation, and a project description (Abedini and Charney 2018).

In regards to genre, until 2019 the musicians had to select from a specific list that includes traditional Persian music, western classical music, Persian folk music, or popular music—divided into playback of recording or live performance. Genres such as jazz, rock, hip-hop, contemporary, metal, etc. were not options. Although from 2019 the forms provide empty space for musicians to write the music genre, there is no information on what genres would be accepted. The process becomes even more complex when applying for a recording or

performance permit in a large concert hall (500 people or more). Permission may only be granted through an established company or business, while the musician must also secure permission from a local police department. Added to the fact that women face many more restrictions when it comes to performance, especially as a singer, the vetting process is always the biggest challenge for Iranian musicians (Youssefzadeh 36).

I was only 7 years old, when permitted popular music became available to the public. When I was in the first grade, and since my teacher knew how much I loved singing, she asked me to sing in the class, but the first thing I did was asking my parents to make sure if it was okay to sing and which song I was able to sing—because I was exposed to popular music from Los Angeles and it was not permitted.[12] I grew up during the time when popular music was exploding in Iran. Meanwhile, through my father, I got to listen to Miles Davis's cassette which was legally published in early 2000. Kenny G was another musician I was exposed to at that time, and he was also known as a Jazz musician among people in Iran. At that time while Western popular music, pre-revolutionary Persian pop, rock and roll, hip-hop, and metal were still banned—most of which are not permitted even to this day—some instrumental music from the West was legally available. For musicians interested in jazz music, this was a great time for a new start. Unlike many popular music genres coming from the West, jazz could be expressed fully through only instrumental pieces similar to what jazz legends such as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Duke Ellington had done. It was also associated with African-Americans who were also fighting the Western white supremacists. Among Iranian musicians, jazz was known as the universal music and it was "placeless" and for the government it wasn't associated with the Pahlavi's regime (Nooshin 140). So quickly, jazz became a great space for musical experimentation, and while

[12] After the Islamic Revolution many musicians, especially the Iranian pop stars moved to Los Angeles and continued their musical productions there. Even today Los Angeles has the largest scene for Iranain pop music.

only a few musicians and groups performed this music, many others used the term without carrying its musical objectives just in order to set themselves free from borders while distinguishing their music from popular music. In other words, Jazz was a free space for cultural collaborations, while carrying an intellectual weight, which made it *musighi-ye fâkher* (high-art music). This is why jazz wasn't perceived as a Western cultural product, it was a universal concept and it could be shaped in any way they wanted without damaging the national identity.

One of the most active and influential jazz musicians in Iran is pianist and multi-instrumentalist Hamzeh Yeganeh. Born in 1977, Yeganeh is among one of the established prominent jazz artists in Iran who has also trained many young jazz musicians. His father was a musician who studied architecture, and played drums, guitar, and keyboards in a band prior to the revolution. He had also worked with the Iranian pop star, Kourosh Yaghmai'e as a drummer. This is how Yeganeh was exposed to 70s progressive rock artists, and developed his interest in rock and jazz. Initially he wanted to become a drummer, but since it was very difficult to buy a drum set during the early 90s, and since his uncle was interested in jazz piano, he started playing piano. Although Yeganeh was fascinated with jazz, since there were no jazz teachers, at the age of 17 he started playing classical piano and attended the Art and Architecture University to study piano and composition" (Zavarei). As Yegahneh says:

> Actually my main methods of learning are listening to music and transcription. I used to play different tunes by ear and this helped me a lot, also playing classical piano helped me to develop my techniques and sight reading, I also studied music composition in university and started playing Iranian instruments like santur and benju and became interested in Iranian folk music specially Balochi music (from south-eastern Iran) and then I started to fuse folk music with jazz and rock (Breyley 316).

Along with guitarist Mahan Mirarab, bassist Dara Darai, and drummer Amin Taheri, they formed the very first jazz band after the revolution, Âbrang. It should be noted that Peter

Soleimanipour who was a saxophonist and composer had collaborated with European jazz musicians a few years prior to that. Also musicians like Ramin Behna who was the keyboardist and composer of Behna band, had also produced music using elements of jazz alongside rock, world music, and Persian folk music. Âbrang was founded by Mirarab and their music was also influenced by Persian folk music as well. Soon after, Yeganeh founded his own band, Naima, and the band has been frequently performing since then, while Mirarab left for Austria in 2008 to pursue his musical career. In 2010 he published his first album "Persian Side of Jazz" in which he performed with his fretless guitar in order to be able to play Persian scales (Mirarab, "Biography").

As I mentioned in the first few lines of this article, from its first days in Iran, jazz was always cross-pollinated with intercultural collaborations in Iran—from Lloyd Miller to Hamzeh Yeganeh. All of these musicians have been actively pushing to dissolve the boundaries between genres and express their individual stories. As Yeganeh told Breyley:

> I have found commons in jazz and Iranian folk music in terms of improvisations so I have the idea of giving form and harmony to folk music so it is comprehensive for all international jazz musicians and they can improvise in these forms and chord changes, I believe jazz music is an international language and means for different cultures to communicate but in an isolated country like Iran it might be seen as a protest to the political situation (316).

The idea of jazz being the placeless music that can be adopted by different cultures and become a new tradition has made jazz a space for Iranians to experience modernization and intercultural collaborations while holding on to their national identity. It has become an opening to connect with the outside world without being accused of advertising Western values. Beside that, it is clear how transnational ideas by jazz legends such as Miles Davis and John Coltrane played an important role here. This is why it is not surprising how Iranian jazz has been

influenced by jazz fusion of the 1970s and musicians such as Miles Davis, Keith Jarrett, and Chick Corea. Although jazz fusion refers to the fusion of jazz and rock, when musicians started using electronic guitar and keyboards, many of them were influenced by music of other cultures—which was also done before in rock music, country and even straight jazz—and that tied the music to the more intercultural audience. Also it seems like the Iranian officials don't see much harm to their idea of not allowing Westernization to enter into the culture, with the jazz scene being alive. On the other hand, Iranian jazz musicians have been trying to avoid labels like protest or Westernized music in order to stay away from facing difficulties with the government. Beside that, jazz in Iran has been focused on instrumental music and very little work has been done with text. This is also another decision made naturally because of the barriers that the government legislates for use of text in music. Despite all these challenges, in the past decade, some of the jazz musicians have published albums with bands including (male) vocalists. In this situation, some female jazz vocalists like Golnar Shahryar immigrated to Austria to pursue their musical careers elsewhere. Shahryar has been by far the most active Iranian female jazz singer who has been publishing several albums and recordings as well as touring around Europe and North America performing an intercultural form of Jazz and Persian music using Persian lyrics and texts. Beside performing folkloric songs and rearranging traditional songs, she has also produced works as a songwriter using original lyrics. Today, there are several young musicians pursuing intercultural music collaborations focused on merging Persian music and Jazz both in Iran and abroad.

It is the sociopolitical complexities made as the result of the 1979 Islamic revolution that encourages any research on music in modern Iran to be expanded into study of music in Iran and its diaspora. Since many influential musicians left Iran or lived abroad for at least part of their

careers, various significant musical projects despite their genres and types were shaped and produced outside of Iran. One of the very first theoretical analyses of classical Persian music was written by Hormoz Farhat, an Iranian scholar who lived and studied in the USA for the majority of his life. While Farhat was a Ph.D. student in Ethnomusicology at UCLA, decided to travel to Iran and study classical Persian music and wrote his dissertation on its theory. Later his work was published as a book titled: *The Dastgāh Concept in Persian Music*, and turned into a highly influential piece for generations after him. There are many examples of Iranian musicians practicing other genres, similar to Farhat's story, and as I mentioned in the previous paragraph even up to this day several jazz musicians have been leaving Iran and pursuing their careers elsewhere. When tracing the history of jazz in Iranian diaspora, one will come across the saxophonist, Hafez Modirzadeh (1962). Although he is not an immigrant musician and was born in the USA, he is the most active and influential musician and scholar whose work has been shaped around the intersection of Persian music and jazz, living abroad.

San Francisco based musician Modirzadeh was born in an Iranian-American family. He has spent many years of his musical career, studying various musical traditions including African American musical traditions, and classical Persian music. Modirzadeh studied the *radif* with Dariush Talai and Mahmoud Zolfonun, and has collaborated with several Iranian artists. He has also spent time in Iran, learning about the culture and offering his knowledge as an educator. Currently, he is Professor and Co-Director of Jazz and World Music Studies at San Francisco State University. Modirzadeh's first record as leader, "In Chromodal Discourse" was published in 1993, which was part of his PhD dissertation project at Wesleyan University. "I coined the term chromodal to refer to an interdisciplinary approach to music making I developed during the

1980s and 1990s: 'chro' signifying 'the spectrum or range of' and 'modality' signifying 'a phenomenon of behavior'" (Modirzadeh 256).

Although this theory and his ideas have evolved over the years, Chromodality still plays a significant role in his music making today. From *Chromodality* (1992), to *Aural Archetype* (2001), to *Musical Compost* (2009), to a *Convergence Liberation Principle* (2012), Modirzadeh has been seeking for ways to move beyond traditions and cultures to connect to musicians as individuals through a universal system.

> ...there exists the potential for one syncretic context to emanate from the integration disintegration of two or more musical idioms. Accordingly, rather than blur or dissolve into one another, musical traditions in respectful coexistence can enhance and sustain their own uniqueness, while allowing musicians to flourish beyond their cultural borders (Modirzadeh 257).

Modirzadeh is interested in perceiving traditions as sources for creations, and their limitations as educational strategies. Then in the process of creation and collaboration, it is the individual who should draw from her own understanding and personal stories in order to create what might become tradition. As he exquisitely puts it together "it is people who make traditions and not the other way around" (Modirzadeh 256).

Modirzadeh is interested in using transformative terminologies, which are well defined, yet original and personal. Chromodality and to be more specific the concept of tetrapaths, as he defines them are "the sharing of commonalities between musical cultures occurs with the building of bridges, or pathways, which connect the 'Source of Unity' within all peoples" (Modirzadeh 123). "The tetrapaths are these bridges, and the steps of this path run parallel with the musical interval of a perfect fourth, the number four being extremely significant, for there are four arrival points: life, faith, love, and music" (Abedini and Charney 2018). On the other hand, I find the idea of searching for the 'Source of Unity,' an essential motivation in Modirzadeh's

creative works. Yet the ways of how he achieved these sources has been different in each of his previously mentioned works. Modirzadeh is not motivated by the idea of mixing two or more musical cultures together; rather he is interested in the idea of representing the uniqueness of each personality through music while musicians don't have to sacrifice their perceptions of music, culture, identity, and finally life.

More Improvisation-based Intercultural Collaborations

While most intercultural collaborations are largely focused on the "West and the rest," throughout history we can find many examples of collaborations between other cultures as well. In Iran, and as I mentioned in the introduction section of this chapter, there has always been an exchange between Iranian musicians and its neighboring countries such as Turkey, India, and Arabic countries. On the other hand because of the diverse ethnicities living in Iran who have their own dialects, languages, and cultures as well as their Iranian nationality and identity, we see a diverse range of folkloric music. The influence of these various ethnic groups on classical Persian music is also evident in every angle, from instrumentation, to pitch and rhythmic materials. In addition, some of these ethnic minorities have their peers living on the other side of the Iranian borders, in neighboring countries. For example, Azeris who are the largest ethnic minority group living in Iran speak Azeri which is also the official language of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Kurds of Iran share the same language and cultural values with the Kurds living in Iraq and Turkey. As a result of such connections, one can find many commonalities between Persian music and its neighboring countries. Therefore most of the intercultural collaborations tend to be focused on strengthening the bonds between these cultures and countries and as many musicians describe it, it is a collaboration between two "brothers". For example, in a press

conference before his concert in Tehran, Azeri tar player Ramiz Qoliev mentions how he thinks of Iran as his second homeland and that he believes the friendship and brotherhood between Iran and Azerbaijan has a long history since they have a shared culture and history (Shabestan News Agency).

More evidence-based examples of such collaborations can be found during Naser al-Din Shah's ruling. For example, the following photo was taken during Naser al-Din Shah's trip to the rural area of Hosseinabad in 1892, when Gholamhossein Khan Herati—a renowned Afghan musician from the city of Herat—is performing in a ceremony (see fig. 5). Early recordings in 1906 and 1909 respectively in Tehran and London show how such cultural exchanges were limited to the adaptation of Armenian, Azeri and Afghan music by Iranian musicians.[13] In the 1920s more intercultural collaborations were shaped between Iranian musicians and musicians from neighboring countries. Perhaps the most notable examples of such collaborations are the recordings of Kamancheh player, Haiko Nonians from the Caucasus and Iranian vocalist, Abolhassan Khan Eghbal-Azar (1863-1971) in 1929 (Abolhassan). Other examples include the collaboration of Saleh Al-Kuwaity Orchestra with Reza-Gholi Mirza Zelli and Ezzat Rouhbakhsh in their trip to Baghdad, Iraq in 1939 (Reza-Gholi Mirza Zelli). Most of these collaborations are focused on performing classical Persian music but in a few moments the musicians move towards performing music of Caucasus or Iraq.

[13] From Mr. Amirali Ardekanian's personal collection in Irvine, CA. Recordings by Gramophone Co. in Tehran in 1906 and in London in 1909.



Fig. 5. Naser al-Din Shah (on the far right) in a photo taken during his trip to Hosseinabad in 1892.

From the middle of the nineteenth century up until the 1979 Islamic revolution, much of the musical exchanges between Iranian and their neighboring countries were done in popular and mainstream music production and such music was gaining popularity (Ardekanian 40). After the 1979 revolution followed by 8 years of unwanted War with Iraq, and during the last years of the twentieth century, more cultural exchanges were shaped. The most notable example is the renowned Iranian composer and tar player, Hossein Alizadeh's (1951) collaboration with the late Armenian duduk master, Djivan Gasparyan (1928-2021) in Endless Vision, an album published in 2005, which was nominated for a world music award in Grammy. This collaboration sets a perfect example of how Iranian, Armenian and Azerbaijan music can come together because of their common grounds. In the liner notes of the album, Alizadeh briefly explains how their collaboration was started and refers to the similarities between the names of different modes, stating that:

> All of these titles [name of various modal systems] had a lot of weight for both [referring to himself and Gasparyan] of us. As if we were reviewing our memories, which have been shaping the destiny of these two cultures for centuries. Iranian and Armenian music

> are a shared language in which each phrase is a mirror of [a common] history for both nations (Alizadeh, Liner notes).

A few years before that, Iranian Kamancheh player, Kayhan Kalhor (1963) and sitar virtuoso Shujaat Husain Khan (1960) formed Ghazal, an ensemble for performing improvised Indo-Iranian music. Based on Kalhor's words: "the music [they] play together reflects the improvisatory styles of [their] cultures. This means taking a small idea or melodic form or phrase and developing it into something much larger, beyond its primary character" (Romero). Meanwhile, their works have been promoted mainly as:

> The synthesis of two great cultures, India and Persia, took place thousands of years ago. Their common roots – the Indo-Persian language, the oldest Persian religion – Mithraism and their related myths, plus many aspects of their social and spiritual lives – have inextricably bound these two cultures together (Konya International Mystic Music Festival).

The same idea of brotherness and celebrating shared values through music making is audible in Ghazal Ensemble's music while in some moments one can hear a blend that moves towards introducing new sound worlds. Their collaborations led to several performances across the globe and publication of four albums: Lost Songs of the Silk Road (Ghazal, 1997), As Night Falls on the Silk Road (Ghazal, 1998), Moon Rise over the Silk Road (Ghazal, 2000), and The Rain (Ghazal, 2003).

Persian and Western Contemporary Music

Western classical music was largely introduced to Iranians during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The 4th Qajar's king, Naser al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896), hired Alfred Lemaire (1842-1907), French musician as deputy music master of the royal guard for his royal court in 1867. Lemair is known as the pioneer of music education in Iran and upon successfully

adding music as a branch to the first university of Iran, Dār al-Funun, he directed the first music academic program and trained many students (Khaleqi). Lemair is also known to be the first musician who strived to write classical Persian music using Western music notation system while he was also the first composer who justified Persian traditional melodies using equal temperament. The focus of Lemair's work was on forming a military band for the royal court and training musicians to serve in the band. He was also asked to compose Iranian national marches, praising the Shah, especially during the international visits.

During the early and mid twentieth century, perhaps the most influential Iranian musician who was trained in both Persian and Western music was Ali-Naqi Vaziri (1886-1979). He was interested in Westernizing Persian music and used Western music theory to generate material and theory for teaching Persian music. Vaziri created two accidentals, *Sori*,[14] and *Koron*,[15] in order to address intervals found in Persian music when transcribing Persian music using Western music notation (Farhat, Iranica). His theory on dividing the octave into 24 equal quarter-steps was influenced by the concept of equal temperament and aimed for developing the possibility of harmonizing Persian music. Vaziri's prominent student, Ruhollah Khaleqi (1906-1965) had a similar music background to his teacher and picked upon his theory and composed several works for orchestras inspired by the idea of harmonizing Persian music. In fact, Khaleqi composed for and conducted the *Golhâ* orchestra, which flourished in his time.

Starting in the twentieth century, the expansion of music education in Iran, which was mostly influenced by Western music, led to a massive growth of music production in the Iranian society. Aside from musicians like Vaziri and Khaleqi who endeavored to use their academic knowledge in Western music to academize Persian music education, there were musicians who

[14] Sori, higher the pitch by 50 cents.
[15] Koron, lower the pitch by 50 cents.

didn't agree with the idea of including Persian music in education curricula. Gholam Hossein Minbashian (1907-1978), was the director of the Conservatory of National Music from 1934-1941 and banned all Persian music classes and instruments from the school. Instead he invited several musicians from the Czech Republic (at the time, Czechoslovakia) to teach in the Conservatory and improve the Western music scene in Iran. However, in 1941 Vaziri became the director of the Conservatory, and immediately brought back the Iranian music education to the school and eventually mandated the study of its fundamentals for all students. Through the Westernization of Iran which was highly supported during the Qajar and Pahlavi's era, more musicians who had training in Western classical music were convinced that classical Persian music shouldn't be studied or taught in music academies. And such an extreme mind set, which is rooted in Western cultural hegemonic propaganda, has still been effective ways of which Persian music is studied, analyzed, taught, and evolved. It has also been an effective social factor that shapes the relationship between musicians coming from these two backgrounds. Despite this controversy, a relatively common mindset was shaped during that time which suggested that the advancement (*pishraft*) of classical Persian music and its success in relating to modern audiences is embedded in its development through borrowing musical elements and strategies from Western music. Harmonization of Persian music based on the concept of tonal harmony, is the main part of this conversation, which was introduced by Vaziri and practiced more actively by Khaleqi and their students (Bastaninezhad 10-11).

Although in the past several years we can see a shift towards studying and perceiving Persian music through the lens of its own musical, cultural, historical, and social implications, the effects of evaluation of this music in comparison with Western music are still in place. In a more recent attempt, musician, composer and tar player, Ali Ghamsari (1983) published a book

titled Iranian Music Harmony (Harmouny Musighi Irani) in 2011, in which he suggests ways of harmonizing Iranian music. In his book, Ghamsari uses excerpts from various Iranian composers who composed pieces for both Persian instruments and Western instruments and strives to focus on the concepts found in Persian music. But most of his analysis and suggestions are heavily inspired by the Western tonal harmony, with a strong emphasis on basic dominant to tonic relationship. On the other hand, there are very few examples of comprehensive analysis of classical Persian music that are not rooted in Western classical music theory, which is also another effect of Westernization.

Aside from all of these and during the same period of time and especially in the mid twentieth century, like many other genres of music,[16] Western classical music was localized in Iran through compositions that included elements of Persian music and culture. Perhaps this was a result of the introduction of Western nationalism to Iranians during the early twentieth century. Several composers such as Gholam Hossein Minbashian and Parviz Mahmoud (1909-1996) composed orchestral pieces using Persian melodies in equal-temperament tuning context. This strategy has been continuously used by Iranian composers, while we can observe its expansion to use of other elements found in Persian music in order to shape a composition. For example there are several compositions for Symphonic orchestras and solo vocalist performed and recorded in the past 20 years in which the Persian lyrics are set on Persian melodies justified through using major or minor tonalities and orchestrated in a Western tonal fashion.[17]

Although this type of music practice has become a stream by itself and promoted especially through Iranian Radio and Television, it has also inspired younger musicians to

[16] In his book, Heavy Metal Islam, Mark LeVine mentions how underground music scene in Iran has a very different quality compare to the other muslim countries, especially because of how Iranians have localized various music genres through adding elements of their own musical and social cultures.
[17] Behzad Abdi (1973) is a composer who has been composing several works for Iranian vocalists and Western orchestras.

investigate more sophisticated use of integration in music composition. Superficial use of Persian music elements in Western music setting takes much less effort especially in the production phase while it satisfies nationalistic ideas. It is much more feasible for a Western classically trained orchestra to perform music that is written using Western tonal music tuning, harmony, and form than performing a piece which includes less-familiar tuning systems. In addition, justifying Persian melodies in order to insert them into the structure of Western music, which is based on synchrony of time and pitch, creates possibilities for musicians who don't know this tradition to be able to perform this music and speeds up the production process. However, such an approach to integrating Persian music with Western music has been largely adding to the hegemonic discourse and doesn't lead to any balanced intercultural experience.

On the other side of the spectrum, and as it was mentioned earlier, musicians like Khaleqi tried to balance the integration of Persian and Western music through bringing the instruments used in both musics together in one orchestra. Iranian National Orchestra (Melli Orchestra) was developed after the Golha Orchestra in order to follow the same mission. Although this type of collaboration seems to be more balanced and less focused on Western musical aesthetics, it follows the idea of using equal-temperament as a source for creating 24-equal quarter-steps scale. On the other hand, one can see how the complexity of Western harmony is scaled down to a very simple form as well. This is why such intercultural collaborations are heavily based on sacrificing and simplifying elements found in both musics in order to create a common ground for achieving a musical product that embraces simply a taste of both cultures. Moreover, the main intention for these collaborations are to create music that can be perceived and understood by Iranian audiences who are rapidly exposed to Western music while also being familiar with Persian music.

Contemporary Iranian composers have also been using elements found in Persian music and culture in their works. While some of these integrations remain solely as sources of inspiration and musical flavors, others have attempted to find deeper approaches in intercultural collaboration. Reza Vali (1952) is perhaps the most influential and active composer who has dedicated all of his compositional career to reconstructing the idea of intonation and tuning, as well as formal structures used in Western composition practices. Vali received his PhD in music theory and composition from University of Pittsburgh in 1985. Since 1988 he has been teaching at Carnegie Mellon University and his music has been widely performed across the USA, Europe and Asia. Vali criticizes equal temperament tuning by composing the majority of his pieces based on his "Mixed Tuning Systems" (Vali). This system is a combination of the important intervals used in traditional Persian music and the equal temperament tuning. He uses the canonical forms found in traditional Persian music performances as the basis of his compositions while he has also written for mixed ensembles—mixing Persian instruments with Western instruments. Although Vali's musical orientation in terms of ways in which he delivers his compositions to performers uses standard Western notation, his choices of ensembles, and in general the aesthetics and ways of which he presents his works are along Western contemporary music tradition, his works embrace opportunities for intercultural dialogue. Through creating a large body of works inspired by a common intention, and emphasizing on his attempt to develop a personal language through drawing on two different traditions, Vali's music has inspired many young Iranian musicians to search for more balanced interpretations of interculturalism in the music making process.

Today, there are many Iranian composers who actively compose pieces inspired or influenced by Persian music, for various musicians, ensembles and orchestras both inside and

outside of Iran. Although in many cases intercultural music making is not the primary focus, the nature of such attempts lead these composers into the exploration of Persian music and culture. Yet, this approach leads to creation of an unbalanced space in which Persian music appears within a dominated musical culture. The result may be seen as the side effect of cultural hegemony, especially because of how the final product would favor Western music. Here the issue arises when one considers such compositions as an attempt for intercultural music making, while there is a strong presence of one culture over another. This is why the intention of the artist and their story becomes a very important part of the intercultural music making process, which I will investigate further in Chapter 3.

Conclusion: Inclusiveness or Modernization

Although there are very few writings on the topic, intercultural collaborations in Iran are seen as a way for the artists and their Persian culture and music to get out from their cocoon and connect to the outside world. Especially after the 1979 Islamic revolution and due to a massive descress in diplomatic relations between Iran and especially Western and Arab countries, Iranian society became more isolated. The need for interconnecting with other cultures and people was gradually growing larger and this is why in the years leading up to the twenty-first century we see numbers of such collaborations finally taking place in Iran and abroad. Most of these modern intercultural collaborations, whether it is through Jazz, classical music, or commercial music, mainly criticize the hegemonic approach to music by traditionalists and more conservative Iranian musicians. Iranian popular musician, Mohsen Namjoo, whose music blends traditional Persian music with rock and has been appealing to the younger generation, believes that the extreme traditionalist mindset of musicians is connected to the religious conservatism and

supremacy brought to power by the Islamic revolution.[18] For Namjoo, the idea of bringing traditional Persian music into an intercultural dialogue is a way to develop a new tone and language that can relate to people in the Iranian diaspora while it also helps him with fighting against hegemony and extreme traditionalism. On the other hand, for a Jazz musician like Hamzeh Yeganeh who blends folkloric Persian music with Jazz, Jazz is an "International language" that can be used for connecting to other cultures. He also believes it is through Jazz that he can give form and harmony to folkloric Persian music (Breyley, 316). Although collaboration is part of Yeganeh's aesthetics, his view on how jazz harmony or form can improve folkloric music is similar to the ideas developed in the twentieth century. As discussed earlier, there was a desire for developing harmony for classical Persian music starting in the early twentieth century, and the main reason behind this was embedded in the idea of modernization of Iran through looking into the West. This is why most of these experiences ended up being influenced by the Western tonal harmony. Even based on my personal interactions with other Iranian musicians including many of whom practice classical Persian music, I have learned that many musicians believe that the Western music is much more sophisticated than Persian music because of its harmonic and textural structure. Although Western classical music is complex in its own form, here the question is on why should it become a factor for evaluation of the complexity and sophistication of other musical traditions and why is there a need for such comparisons in the first place at all?

I believe the answer to these questions can be found in the history of the music industry and how it has been moving towards product and consumerism in order to serve capitalist policies. When selling music similar to how other entertainment products like travel packages are

[18] See Mohsen Namjoo's book, *Chahār maqālah-e Muḥsin Nāmjū*, which is a collection of four articles sharing his thoughts on the current issues in classical Persian music industry and academia.

sold, labeling, rating, and superficial comparison become much more needed. This is how musicians coming from a less presented and known culture are moved towards comparing their music with others and base their evaluations on the elements found in the dominated musical cultures. Although many Iranian musicians might think about intercultural collaborations as an opportunity for improving and developing their musical culture or tradition, I suggest that musicians look into intercultural collaborations as a way of promoting cultural liberation and personalizing their understanding of various cultures. Through such collaborations existing traditions and cultures will also evolve, but if the initial intention is set to improving one music culture by incorporating elements from other cultures, then such collaborations would result in creating a perpetuated hegemony.

When looking into the intercultural collaborations formed in the Iranian diaspora, we can see a different take on why such collaborations are initiated in the first place. Hafez Modirzadeh's works set a great example for intercultural dialogue as a resistance against the cultural hegemony and creating inclusiveness through forming a collective experience. Compared to the examples coming from Iran, which in most cases are looking to reforming themselves by replacing their traditional values with those coming from the West, Modirzadeh aims for cultural liberation. However, both approaches are a form of resistance against dominance in their nature, and target the power relations in music making process and in their own societies.

Not all the intercultural collaborations in the Iranian diaspora are focused on personalizing culture. The structure of the music industry which is somewhat connected to academia as well, pushes musicians to obey the system in order to be heard. This is why Iranian immigrant musicians may also end up promoting exoticism through superficial use of their

cultural backgrounds in order to find a space for their music in the free world market. For the purpose of this research project, and in order to keep the focus on collaborative intercultural music practices, I gave a detailed explanation of what intercultural music means in this project, which would also separate the unbalanced experiences from those that strive to create a new liberal space. But what I would like to conclude this chapter with is to emphasize the importance of acknowledging the complexity that historical, social and political stories bring to the conversation when discussing intercultural music practices, and how it led to differentiating the experiences Iranian musicians have had inside versus outside of Iran. The role of post-colonialism and religion in shaping intercultural collaborations is evident in all the examples I have covered in this chapter. I also strived to emphasize the importance of studying each musical tradition through the lens of its own historical, social, and cultural context and avoid evaluating one music by comparing it to another. This is why in the next section I will provide a detailed analysis of classical Persian music and discuss ways in which it has been integrated into intercultural music.

Chapter 2: Creative Extensions of Classical Persian Music

Introduction

Throughout both my life and research, I have been exposed to various musical cultures which have collectively shaped my creative practices. The most significant influences on my educational background are, in order of significance, Western classical and contemporary music, classical Persian music, and jazz. Taking these factors into consideration, my dissertation is centered upon the idea of a post-intercultural path that is at least as wide as Persian music, jazz, and Western contemporary music. Among these three musical cultures, classical Persian music is the least studied, especially from the perspective of Western academia. Although writings are available with regard to the historical, social, cultural, and theoretical aspects of classical Persian music, only a select few of them expand upon and attend to the ways in which the rich traditions of Persian music may be both personalized and transformed into creative works. These, in turn, are liberated from their historical norms, as they relate to the respective artists, as well as their stories, so that they may finally connect to the artists' communities. To be more specific, through my research I strive to analyze classical Persian music, as well as its repertoire, the *radif*, and to investigate the fundamental principles and values which have shaped this tradition, and its core constituents. Building upon the results of my previous analyses, I examine the existing literature on the subject, in an attempt to find my own way of interpreting this tradition, and to shape my own creative projects. Therefore, in this chapter I include a detailed analysis of the *radif*, primarily based on Hossein Omoumi's theoretical analysis of this repertoire. Moreover I focus my efforts on its core values, as well as its cultural aesthetics. Additionally, I will discuss three musical practices, first proposed and practiced by Reza Vali, Hafez Modirzadeh, and Shahrokh

Yadegari, which remain among the most well-versed examples of their kind. Finally, I explain how classical Persian music has influenced my creative work, and what creative possibilities exist beyond normative traditional Persian musical practices.

The Radif: Repertoire of Classical Persian Music

Given that classical Persian music is a form of improvisatory art, a deep understanding of its modal structure is needed for anyone who wishes to perform, or to creatively use this music (Nooshin 70). Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the repertoire of classical Persian music was compiled by Ali Akbar Farahani (~1820~1861) and his two sons, Mirza Abdollah (1843–1918) and Agha Hossein Gholi (1853-1919). This repertoire is not a composition that was created by the Farahani family, but instead it is a collection of melodies which were practiced and preserved orally by Iranian musicians. Ali Akbar Farahani and his sons compiled these melodies, organizing them into groups based on their intervallic relations (Omoumi, "History of Radif"). It is important to mention here how some of these groupings and melodies, as well as their titles and labels, existed prior to the collection of *radif*; but because of various socio-political reasons, there was no common repertoire of practice in hand, and this music was preserved and taught solely using oral tradition (Talai 11). So one may claim that the Farahani family served to reorganize and restablish a newer repertoire, naming it the *radif* (literary row, or ordered).

Consisting of twelve modal systems, the *radif* includes a number of melodies varied in length—ranging from thirty seconds to five minutes long—known as *gusheh* (literary corner, or referring to part of something). Based on their intervallic relations these *gushe*hs are grouped in

twelve modal systems,[19] which are divided into 7 *Dastgâh*(s) and 5 *Âvâz*(es). Besides these twelve modal systems each of which have a unique name (see fig. 6), each *gusheh* is also named based on their origin, function, structure, or in some cases an unknown reason. Traditionally, the *radif* is taught aurally and this music is known to be an oral tradition. Meanwhile, the *radif* has been recorded and notated using Western standard music notation, and perhaps the most effective and analytical notation has been done by Dariush Talai (Talai, *Radif of Mirza Abdullah*).

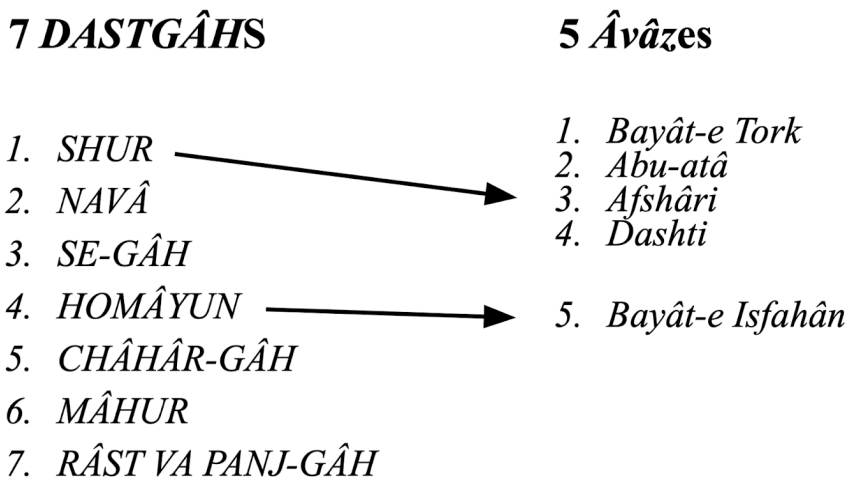


Fig. 6. Names of 7 *Dastgâh*s and 5 *Âvâz*es from Pish-Radif website (Omoumi, "Radif").

Before getting into the musical analysis of the *radif*, there are a few important facts that I will list:

1) Although Ali Akbar Farahani started to compile the *radif*, it was his two sons who completed his tasks and the earliest versions of the *radif* are associated with them. Agha Hossein Gholi and Mirza Abdollah each have their own version of the *radif*. The difference between them is in the number of *gusheh*s.

[19] "Modal system" is a term used by Hossein Omoumi to describe the set of notes used for creating *Dastgâh*s and *Avaz*es.

2) There are two types of the *radif*, the vocal *radif* (*radif-e âvâzi*), and the instrumental *radif* (*radif-e sazi*). The main difference between these two is also in the number of *gushe*hs. Since there are more possibilities for the instruments to play fast passages and generally they have a wider range, the instrumental *radif* includes more *gushe*hs. It is also important to remember that in the vocal *radif*, melodies—not all of them—are set on lyrics, which are all from classical Persian poetry. Although these two types of the *radif*s are different in number of *gushe*hs and while the vocal *radif* includes lyrics, they both have the same structure, organization, and follow the same modal structure.
3) As part of this tradition and its historical background, which is centered around the idea of preserving and organizing traditional melodies, each master musician develops their own *radif*. After years of studying with other musicians and learning various versions of the *radif* as well as teaching it, master musicians start establishing their own version and teach it to their students.
4) Because of the nature of this tradition, the number of *gushe*hs vary from one *radif* to another. Aside from a very few examples in which two modes are mixed together and the number of modes are changed, the systematic organization of *gushe*hs into twelve modes is the common practice, and the variable number of *gushe*hs doesn't affect the main structure of the *radif* (Khaleqi 251). Therefore, this is an indicator of how various *gushe*hs have different functions and weights within these twelve modes, and this is why some *gushe*hs may be dropped or added without affecting this organization.
5) Since *radif* is a collection of traditional melodies, musicians may find and include as many *gushe*hs as they wish into their *radif*, but the main reason why most *radif*s include the same number range of *gushe*hs is embedded in its pedagogical origins. In other

words, the existing number of *gushehs*, provides the learning sources needed. As the *radif* includes the traditional melodic ideas and exhibits how the modal structure of Persian music works, it is perceived as a pedagogical source, rather than a direct performance material. So it is important to consider its pedagogical practicality and philosophy. This is also why a deep understanding of *radif,* combined with researching how musicians use it in their creative works, are both needed for one to be primed for creativity (Talai 12).

6) The presence and importance of poetry in Persian culture has a significant role in classical Persian music and its structure, as well. In Persian, *Khândân* (خواندن) is the verb used for describing both singing and reciting poems, which represents the strong connection between music and poetry (Omoumi, "Poetry in Music"). The term *Âvâz* (literary song) has various meanings and implications in classical Persian music and literature. *Âvâz* refers to a style of performing—both vocal and instrumental—which is a rubato improvisation. It may also be used together with the verb *Khândân* and turn to *Âvâz Khândân* (singing), which describes a vocalist singing. Meanwhile, as was mentioned earlier, *Âvâz* also refers to 5 of the modal systems in the *radif*, and each includes a number of *gushehs*. These linguistic connections and commonalities highlight the importance of poetry in classical Persian music. In addition, when looking into the structure of the *radif*, we will also see how some of the musical elements are influenced by elements of classical Persian poetry.

7) In the seventh century, after Iran became an Islamic country, in several periods music was forcefully banned or partially permitted by various central governments (Omoumi, "History"). Because of such preventions, Persian music was preserved mainly through vocal music, especially in the context of Islamic rituals that include singing

(Chelkowski).[20] Considering these historical and linguistic facts along with its oral tradition nature, it is not surprising that musicians and scholars believe the instrumental *radif* is an imitation of the vocal *radif*, which then has been expanded because of the possibilities instruments generate through their structures. Therefore, like many other musicians, the late Iranian ney player Hassan Kassaie believes all Iranian musicians, despite what instrument they play, must sing and learn the vocal *radif* and study classical Persian poetry (*From Isfahan to Irvine*, 00:26:08 - 00:26:59).

There are several innovative approaches to analyzing the *radif*, the majority of which use the existing music terminologies, most of which were initially meant to define Western musical concepts and elements. Among all of these approaches, I have found Hossein Omoumi's analysis of the *radif*, clearest, most comprehensive, and most informative for creative artists. Especially because of his use of transformative terminology, deconstructing and redefining existing terminologies are not needed. Omoumi uses the General Systems Theory (GST) to analyze the structure of the *radif* ("Analysis of Radif"). He uses the relative openness of various subsystems in relation to one another within a larger system to label *gusheh*s and distinguish them based on their functions. Omoumi considers the *radif* as a large system which includes twelve modal systems divided into 7 *dastgâh*s and 5 *âvâz*es. Traditionally *âvâz*es are derived from *dastgâh*s and one can trace this in their modal structures as well. A *dastgâh* (literary system) has a more complex modal system than an *âvâz* has. As Khaleqi mentions, "Today, the style of categorizing *âvâz*es is very different from the past and the large *âvâz*es are now called *dastgâh*" (18). While this is another indicator for the importance of poetry and vocal music, Khaleqi also points out how *âvâz*es have a less complex system than *dastgâh*s.

[20] As Chelkowski also mentions in his article, several scholars believe that much of classical Persian music was preserved through ta'zia, which is a type of Shi'ite religious ceremony.

Omoumi's systematic approach to the *radif* not only addresses the difference between *Dastgâh* and *Âvâz*, it also extends to the differences found within these 7 *Dastgâh*s and 5 *Âvâz*es. Although these twelve modal systems are more of a subjective interpretation, these are the *gushe*hs that shape the musical atmospheres in Persian music. Commonly referred to as primary and secondary, *gushe*hs are divided into two main categories. In Omoumi's interpretation, *gushe*hs are either open or closed, similar to how systems function. Some systems are fixed and less intuitive and they only do one straightforward task, while others are more complex and their output may be varied depending on various factors. Open *gushe*hs are the musical atmospheres in which musical creation may happen and closed *gushe*hs are basically compositions within open *gushe*hs that follow specific melodic patterns or poetic rhythms and cannot be touched. The "traditional melodic patterns" are the sub-system of all *gushe*hs, so learning and understanding their function and application is an essential part of the learning process (Omoumi, "Analysis of Radif"). Here I provide a few points in order to explain what are the traditional melodic patterns:

1) The modal systems found in classical Persian music are created based on tetrachords, pentachords and in very few cases two tetrachords with shared tones.
2) Each tetrachord or pentachord has a Central Note (*Not-e Shâhed*, literary witness, or in poetry, beloved) and a Final Note (*Not-e Ist*, literary stop). Some may also include a Temporarily Final Note (*Not-e Ist-e Movaqat*), and Variable Note (*Not-e Moteqayer*) that may be raised or flatted.
3) Traditional melodic patterns are generated using these tetrachords or pentachords, and the combination of these patterns shapes the *gushe*hs.
4) Talayei's innovative notation of the *radif* clearly points out many of these traditional melodic patterns (see fig. 7).

5) These melodic patterns are relatively short motivic ideas, that are used in the entire *radif*, and are transposed to different modes.
6) While it is impossible to divide pitch from rhythm when analyzing these patterns, my personal analysis and experiments using computer software have shown how the duration of pitches is related to the function of the pitch within the tetrachord or the pentachord used for that specific *gusheh*.[21] This is why these traditional melodic patterns must be understood and learned based on their functions and can be transposed, or changed in duration as desired.
7) In traditional music performances, there are specific ways one mixes these melodic patterns together to create musical sentences; however, innovation in improvisation is also developed through new approaches in using these patterns after one another.

[21] See Chapter 4. I have used the ml.markov object from the ml.star package on MAX/MSP, to train the computer with traditional melodic patterns found in the *radif* in order to create musical ideas for composition.

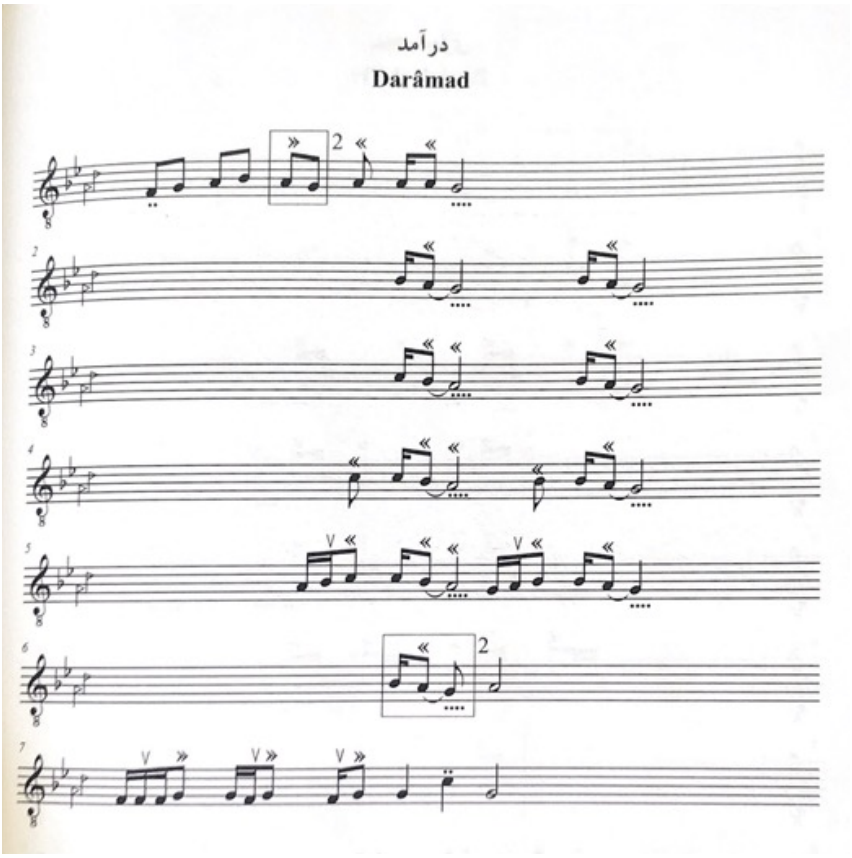


Fig. 7. *Darâmad* of *Dastgâh* of *Shur* from the *radif* of Mirza Abdollah, compiled by Dariush Talai. This format of notation used by Talai focuses on each traditional melodic pattern and writes each of them in one line. Ultimately, the performer plays all of these throughout without any interruptions in between lines.

Through open *gushe*hs, students learn the traditional melodic patterns and how they are put together in order to create a song. Each *Dastgâh* and *Âvâz* have between two to nine open *gushe*hs, each of which are based on specific tetrachords or pentachords (Omoumi, "Analysis of Radif"). The first open *gusheh* in all of the modal systems is *Darâmad* (literary opening), and is created on the lowest tetrachord or pentachord of that system. All of these modal systems follow an ascending structure, and always descend to *Darâmad* for ending. This is why the highest open *gusheh* in all of the modal systems is known as *Oj* (literary climax), although the *Oj* of each *Dastgâh* or *Âvâz* has a different name for its open *gusheh*. For example, the *Âvâz* of *Dashti* has only two open *gushe*hs: *Darâmad* and *Oshâgh*, which is the *Oj* of this *Âvâz*, whereas the

Dastgâh of *Mâhur* have ten open *gushe*hs starting with *Darâmad*, and its *Oj* is called *Râk*. In performance, this ascending structure is usually not followed exactly, especially because of changing of octaves throughout a performance, and depending on the pieces performed. In addition to *Darâmad* and *Oj*, there is a descent, which brings us back to *Darâmad* from other open *gushe*hs, and that is known as *Foroud* (literary descend). Such structure is also very similar to the structure of *Ghazal*,[22] which indicates the influence of poetry in this musical tradition.

Closed *gushe*hs, on the other hand, are similar to compositions that provide more examples of how the traditional melodic patterns can be used in a piece. These *gushe*hs use the musical space that open *gushe*hs offer, and are formed based on a specific poetic rhythm or a fixed melodic idea or gesture (Omoumi, "Analysis of Radif"). In classical Persian poetry there are more than 200 different poetic rhythms, although more than half of them are rarely or never used by practicing poets (L. P. Elwell-Sutton). These poetic rhythms are a great source of inspiration for Iranian musicians and are one of the most significant elements of the *radif*. The rhythms of some of the closed *gushe*hs are based on one of these specific poetic rhythms, and this is how an open *gusheh*—that has a unique name for itself—turns into a closed one and gets a new name. For example, *Masnavi* is a closed *gusheh* that can be found in most of the twelve modal systems.[23] This closed *gusheh* is created based on the rhythmic patterns of Rumi's *Masnavi* poetry, and if one changes the poetic rhythm—by using any other poem that doesn't have this specific poetic rhythm—then it won't be a *Masnavi* anymore. In the case of the instrumental *radif*, melodies played by instruments are shaped based on these poetic rhythms as

[22] Ghazal is a form of poem originated in Arabic poetry and adopted by Persian poets hundreds of years ago. Ghazal usually contains 5 to 12 couplets. Each couplet is independent while linked to the others through the theme and the poetic form of the poem. For example, the end of each couplet rhymes with the end of each of the other couplets.
[23] *Masnavi* is a form of poem with couplets that rhyme within themselves. It is a form that is used by Arabs, Persians, Turks, Kurds, and Urdus. Normally. Persian *Masnavi* is a long poem and is used for lengthy story telling of any kind. There is no specific poetic rhythm for *Masnavi* and poets have used different rhythmic patterns to write in this form.

well. Although it may or may not include a musical meter, there is always a sense of pulse embedded in this rubato style of performance, which is known as *Âvâzi* (literary singing style). Other closed *gushehs* are based on a specific motivic or melodic idea. One can define them by saying that these closed *gushehs* are traditional melodic ideas that were sung or performed with a specific structure. When the *radif* was compiled, these melodies that traditionally had unique names were also categorized based on their musical atmospheres—or the open *gushehs* they were created in. Such *gushehs* were added to the *radif* as a traditional example of how one may use the musical spaces that open *gushehs* provide.

Omoumi's analysis expands on how closed *gushehs* can be divided into vertical and horizontal ones. He explains that some of the closed *gushehs* like *Masnavi* are vertical because the structure of the modal systems is vertical—has an ascending formation—and *Masnavi* can be sung or performed in various open *gushehs* within a modal system. By contrast, the horizontal closed *gushehs* are those which only exist in one open *gusheh* and traditionally cannot be moved or transposed to other open *gushehs* (Omoumi, "Analysis of Radif"). Moreover, the horizontal closed *gushehs*, are relatively closer compared to the vertical ones, because they are melodic or rhythmic patterns that are only used in a specific open *gushehs*. If one tries to use the same pattern in another open *gushehs*, then they come up with a new name for that *gusheh*.

Such an analytical explanation of the *radif* helps musicians to have a better understanding of the components found in this repertoire, and it also helps with improving this pedagogical system. When learning the *radif*, it is important for the student to focus on learning the open *gushehs*; then closed *gushehs* can be used, both as an example of how traditional melodic patterns are employed in creating melodies, and as another source of inspiration for creativity.

The closed *gusheh*s provide us with traditional melodic patterns, since most of them are traditional melodies that have been preserved as part of this oral tradition.

In a traditional music performance, musicians draw from these traditional melodic patterns to create larger musical sentences, and sometimes they take a specific poetic rhythm to inform the rhythmic structure of their improvisation or composition.[24] Timbre, range, and duration—relations between the length of each note—are among the techniques that musicians use for creating their own unique language and sonic world. For the purpose of this research, I will be using this analysis to study different ways in which established musicians have created their own musical aesthetics through integrating classical Persian music with other musical cultures. This is why, in the next section, I will discuss two different works by Reza Vali and Hafez Modirzadeh, as well as the aesthetics behind the development of a music software program by Shahrokh Yadegari. Each of these three examples will guide us through a major musical disciplines. Reza Vali's music is focused on fixed compositions performed by other musicians, Modirzadeh's works are created for improvisers with the author among the performers, while Yadegari's work is an example of intercultural collaboration between human and computer.

Reza Vali: Calligraphy No. 1 (Hazin)

As I mentioned in the first chapter, Vali has dedicated all of his compositional career to reconstructing intonation and tuning, as well as formal structures used in Western composition practices. His theory, "Mixed Tuning Systems" (Vali, "Calligraphies"), combines the important intervals used in traditional Persian music and the equal temperament tuning (see fig. 8). Vali

[24] We should distinguish rhythm from meter, since both the *radif* and some forms of traditional performances are unmetered, while there may still be a sense of pulse or a complex rhythmic structure.

uses the classical Persian music intonations through its accidentals *sori* and *koron*, and most of his works include these two signs. He has been developing software which makes it possible for a keyboard's keys (MIDI notes) to be tuned to any frequency needed. Vali's ambition is to create a keyboard that is not constructed based on equal temperament.

Name of the Interval	Sign	Persian Traditional Tuning Measurement in Cent	Mixed Tuning Measurement in Cent
Minor Second	m	90.5	100
Major Second	M	204.6	200
Small Neutral Second	n	144	144
Large Neutral Second	N	151	156
Plus Second	P	265	255

Fig. 8. Calligraphies: Performance instructions, Reza Vali

He has extensively studied the traditional manner of classical Persian music performance inspired by the *radif* called *sâz-o-âvâz* (literary instrument and voice), which is a rubato form of duo improvisation by a vocalist along with an instrumentalist. In *sâz-o-âvâz*, usually the vocalist leads and introduces the new melodies throughout the performance and the instrumentalist plays the same melody or its variations with some delay, which creates a canonical form. Although this is a general analysis, it can represent Vali's strategies for developing a composition. This formal structure is embedded in his Calligraphy No. 1 for string quartet, which showcases how Vali moves away from Western classical music's forms and finds his own unique formal structure. Despite its similarities to the form of *sâz-o-âvâz*, the two are not identical, and still have their own formal identities.

In Calligraphy No. 1, Vali uses the melody of *gusheh* of *hazin*, which is one of the several closed *gushe*hs that is shared between a few of *dastgâh*s and *âvâz*es (see fig. 9). He took *hazin* from *dastgâh* of *shur*, and developed it throughout the piece. This is why the piece is in the mode

of *shur* in A, meaning that the central note (*note-e shâhed*) of its *darâmad* is A (see fig. 10). In fact, *hazin* is more like a rhythmic and gestural pattern that appears in different modes. The arch of the melody, and the ascending and descending motion between the pitches, make it distinctive.

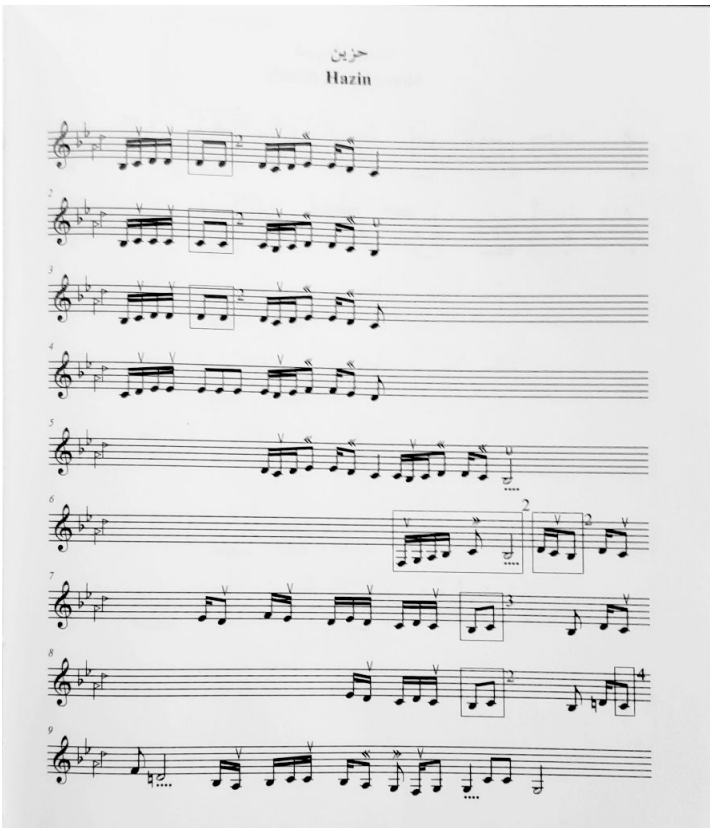


Fig. 9. *hazin*, from the *radif* of Mirza Abdollah, compiled by Dariush Talai. Here *hazin* is in *dastgâh* of *shur* in G.





Fig. 10. The opening of Calligraphy No. 1 by Reza Vali

In the following table I provide a detailed analysis of Vali's Calligraphy No. 1, which will help us understand his method of integrating classical Persian music and Western European music in order to create an intercultural dialogue.

Rehearsal Marks	Description
Until No. 2	Solo viola, playing the first part of the *hazin*
No. 2 - No. 3	Violin I comes in with the melody one octave higher while viola holds

	the C with some ornamentations around the D
No 3 - No. 4	Cello and soon after violin II (one octave higher than cello) came in playing the established melody but inverted and starting on G. Viola and violin I hold the G with some ornamentations. Here there is a canon between the cello and the violin II. Playing the same melody two beats apart from one another while being an octave apart as well.
No 4 - No. 6	Here there is a more complex canon between all of the instruments: Violin I start playing the melody from F (moving to *shur* in D). The viola plays the same melody from F, two beats apart. Violin II plays the very first melody, and the cello plays the same melody as violin II one beats apart. It is technically possible to move from *shur* in A to *shur* in D because of their intervallic relations.
No 6 - No. 7	One measure before No. 6 there is a sense of cadence, and on number 6 starting with violin I the inversion of the material used in No. 4 - 6 is used, very similar to what occurred in No 3 - 4. The end of No. 6 includes an ascending move to create a smooth transition to the next section.
No. 7 - No. 8	Violin I and II plays the melody of *hazin* from F and C, and one beat later viola and cello come in an octave lower playing the same melodies

	as violin I and II. (violin I and viola are G, while viola and cello are back to the original A). Two measures after No. 7, the inversion of the melody is played with the same groupings. In the last 3 measures, though a descending passage, the music moves to the next section
No. 8 - No. 9	Here, the second half of the *hazin* appears in the original mode (A), which starts with a ascending passage from G to the E *koron*, and then descents little by little, while the E *koron*, turns natural (which connects *shur* to *âvâz-e dashti*, but traditionally this is used as a quick gesture and musicians quickly move from it)
No. 9 - No. 11	Here Vali uses this E natural and creates a new space in *âvâz-e dashti* using the same canonic idea which works more like a delay. In this section violins move to their lowest registers while viola and cello join them playing in their middle registers. Having all of the instruments playing around the same frequencies, in the middle range of the whole quartet brings the descending feeling to the piece.
No. 11 - No. 12	In this section, Vali expands the last four notes of *hazin*, which is traditionally called *bâl-e kabutar* (means pigeon's wing). This is a traditional ending for a *gusheh* that marks a 1-4 or 1-5 relation, in which 1 is the *not-e shâhed* of the *darâmad*. In this case A, and it's relation to

	D. In *dastgâh-e shur* the fourth degree is always very important because it is the *shâhed* of an important *gusheh*, named *oj*, as well as being the final note or *not-e ist* for all the other important *gushehs* coming after *oj*.
Note:	While in the recording on which I based my analysis, by the Carpe Diem String Quartet, didn't include the contrabass line, Vali's score includes a drone on D during the entire piece.

Vali says he was fascinated by Persian music and culture, but he was already an established composer, so he decided to study this music using the theoretical tools with which he was already experienced (Vali). This is how he decided to create software for detuning MIDI notes. "Arghonoon" is a software program that is "capable of replicating tuning systems from all over the world" (Seattle Chamber Music). Vali's music may be considered to be in a post-intercultural path as the intention of his music is not to represent specific cultures, but rather to expand the binary view of music making to a more personal space. He is not forcing his music to convince and/or convey a cultural identity. While he might be still considered as a Western music composer, Vali is pushing the boundaries to open up for more inclusiveness in the scene.

Hafez Modirzadeh: In Chromodal Discourse

Modirzadeh's PhD dissertation *In Chromodal Discourse*, was published in 1993. One of the pieces from "In Chromodal Discourse" (disc 1), which embraces the idea of moving beyond common intercultural music making, is Yeganeh (literary oneness), here referred to as a person's name (female name in Persian). Not only are the musical elements in this piece personal and

reflective of each musicians' uniqueness, but the story behind it is also personal to Modirzadeh. This is why, when I first listened to Yeganeh—which incidentally was the very first piece that I heard from Modirzadeh—I felt a pure sincerity embedded in the music, which is undeniable. As his music is personal in both musical and extra-musical contexts, it moves away from genres and formal hierarchies embedded in traditions and cultures.

Yeganeh is a poem Modirzadeh wrote in 1989 describing a vision he had from a dream (Modirzadeh). At that time he was engaged to his wife, Yeganeh. The poem was translated to Persian with the help of a friend and was recited over a melody inspired by *âvâz-e dashti* on top of a 12-bar blues in E minor, which was the first chromodal piece he created in 1990 (Modirzadeh). The form of the piece reminds me of the *golhâ* radio program in which a poem was recited while the musician(s) played a *rubato* background music. After the poem was over, the musician(s) would continue playing with more freedom in improvisation followed by other musicians joining and usually ending up playing a rhythmic instrumental piece. Despite the language in which the text is recited, the timbre and color of his voice creates a mysterious yet energetic atmosphere, which promises a unique collaboration to follow. The opening of the piece includes piano, but it only plays very few notes and disappears soon after. With this short use of the piano in the opening section the listener expects to hear the piano again at some point in the piece. This marks a great beginning for an eight-and-a-half-minute long piece. After three minutes the tombak comes in for the first time, which sets a constant pulse. Until then there was no constant pulse, which is similar to the *âvâzi* in classical Persian music.

As mentioned above, the melody is set on a 12-bar blues in the key of E minor—yet it is inspired by *âvâz* of *dashti* with the *not-e shâhed* (central note) of its *darâmad* on F# and F *sori*.[25] Here the 12-bar blues progression and unequal temperament tuning of Persian music come

[25] The *Shâhed* of *Darâmad* of *Dashti* is also *Not-e Moteghayer* (variable note).

together, using the musical application of a *tetrapath* that "centers around the splicing or combination of a tetramode" (Abedini and Charney 2018). Tetramodes are "melodic creations" based on a perfect fourth or fifth. This is very similar to how *gushehs* are created in classical Persian music. However, in tetramodes the first and fourth notes are stable, while the two inner notes are variable (*moteghayer*), which open up modulation possibilities. In this theory, a tertramode can be created using a mixture of intervals of ½ step, ¾ step, whole step, and $\frac{5}{4}$ step. In order to apply melodies inspired by tetrapaths theory on chord progressions, Modirzadeh suggests thinking of the two inner notes as upper tension, which could in fact be derived from the partials. With the introduction of the term "harmodal", Modirzadeh "converts vertical structures to horizontal ones" (Modirzadeh 176).

In addition to the poem recitation followed by the piano solo, there are four 12-bar melodies labeled with letters A, B, C, and D over the same chord progression. After the first piano solo, which is inspired by the main melody, the 48-bar melody is played once with saxophone and piano, later joined by tombak and, in the last few bars, by the full ensemble. Then the piano takes another solo for 48 bars, inspired by the melody—over the full ensemble. The saxophone is the next to take the 48-bar solo, and finally the bass, which is joined by the piano and saxophone at the end for a synchronized ending (see fig. 11).



Fig. 11. Score for Yeganeh: cited from Modirzadeh's dissertation on chromodality, pp. 49 and 51.

In his writings on this piece, Modirzadeh explains how each 12-bar melody is created based on one of the three tetramode combinations that he specifies (Modirzadeh 176). Since he used *âvâz* of *dashti*'s modal structure, in the following figure I provide the tetrachords creating *âvâz-e dashti*'s two main *gushe*hs, *darâmad* and *oshâgh* (see fig. 12). Since *âvâz-e dashti* is derived from *dastgâh-e shur*, there is always a form of recurrence of *darâmad* of *shur*, which we see in section D. This is why I have included the pentachord of *darâmad* of *shur* here, as well.

darâmad of *âvâz-e dashti*



oshâgh in *âvâz-e dashti*



darâmad of *dastgâh-e shur*



Fig. 12. Tetrachords for *âvâz-e dashti* and pentachord of *darâmad* of *shur*. The arrows indicate how the variable note (*moteghayer*) is altered when ascending and descending.

Comparing these tetrachords and pentachords with the tetramodes that Modirzadeh has introduced in his dissertation conveys how he has internalized classical Persian music and took what serves his intentions out of it. In addition, his harmodal theory indicates the same internalization of his jazz studies. Intuitively, Modirzadeh includes traditional melodic patterns found in *âvâz* of *dashti* in this piece, while he doesn't necessarily follow the traditional practice

for creating melodic ideas, especially since he uses strict meter. In his explanations, Modirzadeh says:

> The innovation of this piece lies in its double-nature: not only could this dashti melody be performed by jazz musicians, but by a traditional Persian ensemble as well (the personnel on the recording demonstrate this). The fact that nothing needs to be sacrificed in order to articulate each individual idiom successfully, demonstrates that structure, transformed for the purpose of having meaningful cross-cultural musical dialogue, is a primary consideration for chromodal discourse (Modirzadeh 178).

Shahrokh Yadegari: Lila

UCSD Professor Shahrokh Yadegari is a composer and sound designer with a background in electrical engineering. He has studied and researched classical Persian music and has collaborated with Iranian musicians. His electroacoustic works incorporate elements of classical Persian music and set an inspiring example for intercultural collaboration focused on Persian music and computer music. As a PhD student at UCSD, Yadegari developed a program, *Lila*, using Pure Data,[26] that is "based on simple analog processes (e.g., loop, delay, ring modulation, and feedback) whose parameters are controlled precisely by a performative action" (Yadegari, Lila). As Yadegari mentions in his PhD dissertation, Lila is a computer music instrument that was developed inspired by the philosophical concepts found in Omar Khayyam's poems.[27] Materialism and self-reflection are the two influential concepts embedded in Khayyam's poems that Yadegari drew upon. Not only in Khayyam's philosophy but also in many Iranian and non-Iranian philosophies, the idea of self-referentiality is practiced in different ways. Having a computer music instrument like Lila that utilizes delay as its main tool, helped Yadegari to apply the concept of self-referentiality in a creative musical process (Yadegari 165).

[26] Pure Data (PD) is a visual programming language developed by Miller Puckette in the 1990s for creating interactive computer music and multimedia works.
[27] Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) was a Persian mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and poet.

The concept of delay and one of its possible sub-effects, echo—which can be thought of as a one time delay loop—can be found in the traditional performances of classical Persian music.

Earlier in this chapter, I showed how Reza Vali uses *sâz-o âvâz* (instrument and vocals) as a formal structure of his compositions. Yadegari's Lila expands this idea and brings it into the computer music world where more opportunities for creative expression become available. When performing *sâz-o âvâz* (instrument and vocals), the instrumentalist sets the mode—the specific modal system that is going to be performed—and then the vocalist joins. The overall form includes several solos by the instrument and several vocal solos that are supported by the instrument as a background texture. In each vocal solo, the vocalist starts singing either a line of a poem or a *tahrir*.[28] Then with a few seconds of delay the instrumentalist enters playing the same melody sung by the vocalist with some variations. Creating this delay is mainly possible because melodies in classical Persian music are composed of several motives that end with a long tone. When the vocalist hits that long tone, it is the time for the instrumentalist to enter and as soon as the instrumentalist enters the vocalist moves to the next motif—although this is not always the case, but the overall form is based on this. While the melodic idea and the contour stays the same, the timing of each event is usually shifted around. *sâz-o âvâz* is the main part of a classical Persian music performance. In a concert or an album there are a few *sâz-o âvâz*, each of which are often ten to fifteen minutes long.

It is interesting to see how the same format is used for teaching the *radif*. The teacher starts to sing the melody, and the student tries to sing the exact same melody with a few seconds' delay. In this case the goal is to imitate every detail, while in *sâz-o âvâz* the idea is to project the musical atmosphere that is created by the vocalist while the instrument turns into a supporting

[28] *tahrir* (ornamentation) "typically is a sequence of *tekyeh* fundamental frequency gestures that quickly increase and then decrease" (Tahamtan).

texture for the vocalist in the background. In both cases, imitation is associated with the short term memory, which is similar to the idea of delay in a computer. Such similarities between the classical Persian music tradition and the concept of delay in computer music create a common ground for musicians to get engaged with these two musical traditions on a deeper level. The result may help create an intercultural collaboration in which no one needs to sacrifice for the other, and hopefully more possibilities are created for new traditions to be shaped.

Delay is one of the most complex effects, which can determine several other sonic elements, such as timbre, rhythm, and form. In a traditional performance setting, when the instrumentalist answers the vocalist in *sâz-o âvâz*, they have usually played together many times and have determined the approximate time of entrance and exit. Especially when using text, the meaning of the poem also affects these acoustic delays created by the instrumentalist's playing. Above all, the sonic culture,[29] that shapes this tradition plays an important role in such forms of calls and responses. When interacting and performing with a computer using Lila, this hierarchy—which in a traditional setting leans towards the vocalist—can be discarded and new opportunities are created. The length of the delay, the timbre of the sound, and the length of the echo may be determined by the performers in an interactive process.

Conclusion

As I have discussed in the first chapter, classical Persian music and its repertoire, the *radif* have been a source of inspiration for many intercultural collaborations. However, these experiences risk seeming to facilitate *exoticism* through an unbalanced utilization of different musical cultures. There are many musical examples in which the use of Persian musical elements is limited to borrowing a simple melodic idea or cliché use of timbres of Persian instruments, or

[29] Sonic culture refers to a particular set of music/sound creating process or listening practices among a social group.

a vocalist singing using the classical Persian vocal techniques. In some cases there are deeper connections, such as using poetry and Persian lyrics, or using some of the intonations found in the Persian tuning system. While some of the musicians creating these musical works don't have the intention of creating an intercultural dialogue, some claim this as their main form of expression. In the majority of such experiments, the more dominant cultures—usually the one that is more known and receives more attention—will take over the lesser known culture and result in propagation of cultural hegemony through *Mcdonaldization* (Ritzer 100).

In this chapter, I looked into specific works by three Iranian-American musicians whose works embrace elements of classical Persian music in an intercultural context. Although the three examples I provided are from differing music disciplines, the common quality is how all of these artists have developed their own method of how to engage classical Persian music in intercultural collaboration, in order to liberate themselves from rationalized norms created by power dynamics. Additionally, in all these three examples, the intention is to highlight the process as opposed to the product, and more importantly to focus on becoming as opposed to identifying. These two qualities are what I strive to address and achieve both in my creative work and in this written dissertation.

In the next chapter, I introduce the creative part of my dissertation, a radio opera produced during my final year as a PhD student at the University of California, Irvine. I also discuss the musical and extramusical aesthetics and strategies that shaped my work.

Chapter 3: Taking a Post-Intercultural Path

Introduction

From the historical and theoretical analysis that I have laid out in the first two chapters, it is evident how a musician's personal story and the process of "becoming"—as opposed to producing—are the two core qualities of a promising intercultural collaboration. While seeking to understand the personal intention of an artist, or a person in general, can be vain, "by figuring out who collaborates with whom for what reasons, we might get a realistic view on the potential of inter/musical collaboration" (Langenkamp 10). Despite how positive the intention is, it is the process of creation and presentation that shapes the social and cultural impact of an intercultural music work. In ideal situations, the focus of an intercultural collaboration should be on turning the musician's awareness of various traditions to a collective liberation from formal, social, and cultural obligations. Instead of producing a work that cultivates fixed sonic identities, the aim is to establish an inclusive space where tradition is not the force, but rather it is the source. In addition, the concept of becoming endeavors to introduce a creative space through the musicians' personal stories in order to resist cultural hegemony.

I suggest taking a post-intercultural path as opposed to coining a new term that could label musical works of a certain kind. I don't even wish to label my music or anyone else's works as "post-intercultural music". Besides how the concept of labeling promotes exclusiveness, I don't find the label itself does much to improve the existing intercultural discourse. I also don't believe that we have already passed interculturalism and now it is the post-intercultural era. Rather, I believe we must rethink what an intercultural collaboration can be and how we can achieve a more liberating and meaningful experience. Therefore, a post-intercultural path

shouldn't be mistaken with using post-intercultural as a label, which I want to avoid. A post-intercultural path suggests to musicians to look into an intercultural collaboration beyond simply a space in the midst of various cultures. I strive to challenge the intercultural collaborations by pushing toward post-inter and post-cultural. Moreover, the desire behind a post-inter path is to question the concept of "occurring or existing in between," while a post-cultural path intends to free the mind from the existing normative barriers set by traditions.

I will now explain the process of forming, developing, and presenting "Diaspersity: a radio opera", which I produced as the artistic part of my PhD dissertation. The full recording and corresponding scores can be found in the Appendix. for reference. I will conclude this chapter by introducing the musical and extramusical strategies that I have developed in order to move along a post-intercultural path.

A Radio Opera

When I started to develop this creative/research project, my plan was to produce a concert divided into two parts. For the first half of the concert, I was planning to compose a multi-movement work for a string quartet, vocals, and computer/tape, mainly because I have had valuable experiences working with the Del Sol String Quartet through my exploration in the intercultural music field.[30] String quartet provide a wide range of possibilities for experimenting with intonation, timbre, range, and texture, while the players are also able to use their voices to sing and play simultaneously. I was also interested in composing for myself as a vocalist in collaboration with the string quartet. In that setting, I was planning to use a computer for live

[30] The San Francisco-based Del Sol String Quartet was founded by violist Charlton Lee and has been actively performing contemporary music with a focus on community building. See *Kooch-e Khamân*, an album of compositions for string quartet by expatriate Iranian composers.

processing of the sound using different types of delay, as well as creating electronic tracks that would complement my compositions for string quartet and voice. The second half of the concert was planned to include an improvised music performance by the Sibarg Ensemble. Through this formation I was hoping to bring the musical cultures that I have been most engaged with together in one performance.

It was exactly when I finished my presentation on a post-intercultural path at the UC Irvine Music Department's ICIT Colloquium that UCI personnel received an email notifying all the university's faculty, students, and staff of the complete shutdown of in-person activities due to the spread of the coronavirus. That was the first time I had presented my dissertation topic, and these ideas were just forming. The unexpected changes in access to people and spaces demolished everyone's plans, including my fledgling ideas for my dissertation concert. Since my project was heavily based on collaboration, onsite performance, and improvisation, the uncertainties caused by the pandemic strongly affected my creative project. Those struggles propelled me to search for the initial causes of my research questions, and to reorganize my creative project. In this path, I realized how from the first day of forming the Sibarg ensemble I was trying to fight with class differences, labels, and the existing bitter separatist conversations between different musical cultures, as well as the "low art" and "high art" classifications. Additionally, I discovered that my initial plan for dividing the concert into two different parts was not reflecting my background nor my aim with this research project. I was hoping for this concert to be a portrait of my journey as an immigrant, musician, and researcher. My main intention was to release myself and the music I was producing from boundaries created by labelings found both in industry and academia, let go of the traditions I have been tied to and followed for decades, and let my sonic culture determine the creative process and delivery

methods. Yet, I was hoping to achieve all these in a collaborative environment despite the limitations set by the pandemic.

In this situation, producing a pre-recorded concert appeared to make the most sense, but the problem of dividing myself into Hesam the composer-performer and Hesam the improviser was still present. Therefore, I decided to produce a large multi-movement piece for a string quartet, Sibarg ensemble, and computer. I was still interested in writing for other musicians including myself, and improvising, but I was also hoping to create a space in which these two were not separated. This was when I had to assess the technicality and possibility of recording a concert that was going to include several musicians, some of whom were not even living in California, while considering the pandemic complications. Given this situation, I decided to produce the work in a multi-track recording format, and ask my collaborators to record their tracks in their homes. I was aware that in some cases I could join them for the recording and help with the process, which was also beneficial for the musicality of the work and could ease the post-production phase. In this new setup, part of the challenge was to take several roles by myself. I planned to create the pieces, perform, and direct the production, as well as mixing and mastering the recordings.

I wanted the process of producing the recorded project to be part of the research development as well. In other words, I welcomed radical shifts and last-minute fundamental changes, especially those occurring through collaboration and discussion with the other musicians involved in the process. While developing the recorded concert, a fundamental question arose, which changed the direction of the project. The question was whether there should be any visual component—videos of performers playing or any other video arts—and what that might convey, and how it would direct the project towards moving along a

post-intercultural path. Here, a more basic question is what visual components add to an intercultural music performance and how it affects the listeners' experience.

For example, Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble brings several musical cultures together, and their visual appearance in live performances as well as their promotional materials—their website, photos, videos, and even album artworks—include these instruments from all over the world that evoke the sense of multiculturalism for the audience in the very first glance. I believe this colorful appearance of lesser known cultures in an entertaining setting endorses the globalization practiced by the capitalist industries. As Harm Langerkamp mentions:

> The repertoire of the Silk Road Ensemble presents a diverse array of styles, including besides large-scale "works" in the modern sense of the word, also improvisation sessions and (arrangements of) folk musics that undoubtedly reach a larger audience. But again, despite his wish to create something that goes beyond exoticism, Ma does not seem to have been able to escape the "the logic of consumer Capitalism" (Composing Dialogues).

Perhaps one of the main reasons for this is the fact that Silk Road Ensemble receives its funding from corporations such as Sony Music entertainment company. Although Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble have been promoting "music that engages difference, sparking radical cultural collaboration and passion-driven learning for a more hopeful and inclusive world" (Silkroad), in many ways their path aligns with the world music *industry*. Such strategies and directions also affect the presentation of the artist and visual components, both in promotional materials and in performance settings, which would stand under the same umbrella.

While researching how visual presentation may affect listeners' perception of music, I recalled a concept I encountered concerning exoticism and its meaning in an intercultural music setting. In the pre-cinema era, especially in the 1800s and even through the mid 1900s, human zoos were unfortunately popular in imperialist countries like France and the United States

(Human Zoos). The idea was to showcase the life of the indigenous tribes living in the colonized countries, including Africans and south Asians.

> One of the most popular exhibits was the Igorot village, an ethnic group perceived as the least civilized of those on display. An audience success; the revenue from this attraction was said to have surpassed that of all the other villages combined. This exhibition featured indigenous people in minimal clothing and who could often be found eating dogs as the audience clamored for a better look. While the eating of dogs was a sensational curiosity for western audiences, it was also a misrepresentation. The Igorot did eat dogs, but only for ceremonial reasons. Yet during the seven months of the fair, dogs were fed to the Igorot daily. The tribespeople also performed infrequent sacred rituals, such as crow[n]ing a chief, as daily entertainment, to their [the] delight of the parasol-spinning audience (Human Zoos).

Although comparing such an unhumanitarian act with the staging of intercultural music may be considered harsh, I believe human zoos may be an exaggerated example of how "other" musical cultures have been presented on many occasions. When lesser known musics and cultures are presented simply for entertainment and amusement under the shadow of a dominant culture, their visual representation may also add more exoticism to their sonic production. In this situation, instruments and costumes of "other" cultures become an exotic exhibition, and the result may partly support and promote "othering". Here I am not suggesting that intercultural performances inadvertently or intentionally incorporate such effects, but rather I am pointing out how the visual presentation of an intercultural collaboration may affect its social and cultural impacts. Therefore, the extramusical questions of who is the author and who are the collaborators, what is the purpose of the collaboration, and how is the project conducted, become important. Finding the answers to these questions may help us with distinguishing liberating intercultural collaborations from those that are hegemonic in their origin.

Considering all of the above, I became interested in Pierre Schaeffer's writings on *musique concrète* and its philosophy. Schaeffer uses the term *reduced listening* to describe a

"listening attitude which consists in listening to the sound for its own sake, as a sound object, by removing its real or supposed source and the meaning it may convey" (Chion et al. 31). The aim is to free the sound from what the sound object's historical and cultural backgrounds suggest or impose on the listener. I have had several experiences when performing with my ensemble—especially in concerts with the majority of audience members being of Iranian descent—as soon as they see the Persian instruments on the stage, they expect to hear classical Persian music or a specific type of world music. Many of them have talked to me about this after concerts and some expressed their wonderment of how other sonic worlds may be born from these instruments. "By isolating the sound from the 'audiovisual complex' to which it initially belonged," one creates an "acousmatic situation"[31] leading to a reduced listening experience, and in an intercultural context it opens up more possibilities for the musician to focus on personal interpretation of cultural codes (Chion et al. 11). Yet, I don't think of the acousmatic situation as a way of removing cultural aspects of various musical traditions; rather, I see it as an opportunity to avoid imposing meanings through visual representations. In this sense, the music may include cultural codes that might affect the audience's perception, but the story will primarily be created through the sound itself.

Acousmatic experience was an important factor in why I decided to describe my work as a radio opera, but I was inspired by other works and artists, as well. As I mentioned in the first chapter, *golhâ* radio program had an important influence on the Persian music scene for over two decades before the 1979 revolution. Although it was not a radio drama,[32] each program had its own theme, and the narrative was drawn from classical Persian poetry, which within itself carries elements of drama.

[31] See Michel Chion's "Guide to Sound Objects" page 11-12.
[32] See Crook.

> The *Golha* ('Flowers of Persian Song and Music') radio programmes were broadcast on Iranian National Radio for 23 years from 1956 through 1979. They comprised approximately 850 hours of programmes made up of literary commentary with the declamation of poetry, which is also sung with musical accompaniment, interspersed with solo musical pieces (Lewisohn "The Golha Programmes").

The program would start with a theme song, usually played by a solo instrument, and included poem recitation by the narrator of the program who would also introduce the musicians and read the poets' biographies and give an analysis of their approach to poetry. The tone and color of the narrator's voice was dramatic and poetic, which would turn *golhâ* to a storytelling style of radio program. The interesting part of its musical production was how Western and Persian instruments would come together in an intercultural dialogue, yet heavily based on classical Persian music. Another important aspect of the program was how it brought Persian literature, poetry, and music together, which led to a massive production of classical Persian music masterpieces. Even the instrumental performances were inspired by the poems recited or sung in each program. Moreover, the attempt to promote Persian culture through literature, poetry and music in a program that brought together renowned Iranian scholars, poets, and musicians to create an engaging story-like radio program, was an inspiration for me to explore this platform in my own creative work.

My first encounter with the term radio opera goes back to when I was an undergraduate student at UC San Diego. Yvette Janine Jackson's works *Invisible People* (2014) and *Destination Freedom* (2017) were both presented as a radio opera. In her PhD dissertation, Jackson describes radio opera as "a type of electroacoustic composition designed to be experienced in darkness in order to animate the theater of the mind" (Jackson x). She also uses the term "narrative soundscape composition" as "the convergence of electroacoustic music and radio drama" (Jackson 9). Through borrowing from radio drama, Jackson turns the narrative soundscape

composition into an opportunity for the music to express social issues (Jackson 13). Since my music always incorporates poetry in one way or another, I have always been interested in creating a unifying narrative for my compositions and performances. My composition *Suffering* (2017) is a mini opera reflecting on devastations caused by wars, which I composed for my undergraduate honors recital at UCSD. I used poems by contemporary Iranian poets, Ahmad Shamlou (1925-200) and Fereydoon Moshiri (1926-2000), both as the text for different movements and as a source of inspiration for compositional development of the work. Similarly, with each Sibarg Ensemble's performance I strive to set a narrative reflecting on the current social and political issues. Classical and contemporary Persian poetry is the common element in all these works. In most of these cases I have not conveyed a direct message through the words, rather I use both music and text to engage the audience in an experience, which allows them to imagine their own stories. This is similar to Jackson's strategy for activating the "theater of mind" in listeners, and also embraces Schaeffer's concept of reduced listening (Jackson 59).

The term radio opera doesn't necessarily refer to a work that is meant to be broadcasted on radio, although it certainly could be. It is a reference to an electroacoustic work which allows the audience to create their own dramatic scenes in their minds through the sounds they hear. Therefore, it can be presented as an acousmatic concert work almost in any space, and will soon be produced as an album. I invited the audience to experience listening to my radio opera in a dark room since I wanted them to focus on their thoughts and perceptions of the music. Compared to other radio operas that I have encountered, my work is a relatively long piece. *Diaspersity* is an hour-long radio opera consisting of twelve movements recorded by the Eclipse String Quartet Sibarg Ensemble, and concrete music works produced in Logic.

Diaspersity

This musical work is a narrative of my sociopolitical and musical struggles, as a bi-cultural immigrant. The three main issues that shape the story of this radio opera are: 1) The long-existing tension between the Iranian and the USA governments, 2) Social issues that people of color and Iranian immigrants face in the USA, 3) while constantly being affected by the acts of their authoritarian regime in Iran. These injustices leave me with dispersed thoughts and feelings about my diaspora and the diversity I see around me. Therefore by combining diaspora—a term rooted in dispersion—and diversity, I named this work, *Diaspersity*.

The text and poems I used collectively address the issues of existing commercialized celebration of diversity, as well as using religion as cover up for corruption and propagation of hegemony. To reflect on such issues, I focus on a few recent related events.

1) The executive order for "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States," known as the "Travel Ban" or referred to as the "Muslim Ban" by critics, suspended entry of certain aliens from seven majority-muslim countries into the USA (Federal Register). The ban affected many naturalized citizens of the USA who were born in these seven countries, including myself. I use this example to reflect on how we still have a long way to go to achieve the form of diversity that embraces social justice.

2) The horrifying incident of the Ukrainian flight in Tehran, Iran, Flight #752, which was scheduled to take the travelers from Tehran to Kyiv on January 8, 2020. Unfortunately, shortly after the takeoff the airplane was shot down by two missiles launched by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp, and all of the 176 passengers and crew were killed. The incident happened only a few hours after the Iranian strikes on US bases in Iraq, which was a response to the Americans' assessination of Iranian Major-General, Qassem Soleimani. While the

investigation is still incomplete and there is no transparency regarding why and how these two missiles were launched, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said, "The evidence indicates that the plane was shot down by an Iranian surface-to-air missile [and] this may well have been unintentional" (Iran Plane Crash: What We Know about Flight PS752). Despite the disjointed response of the Iranian government, which started with denial and led to claiming that was an unintentional accident, the Iranian President of the time, "Hassan Rouhani described the crash as an 'unforgivable mistake'" (Iran Plane Crash: What We Know about Flight PS752). While several questions remain unanswered, the majority of Iranians still carry the anger caused by this bloody incident.

3) The uncertainty of music and the boundaries set by the Iranian government on its accessibility, prohibits solo female voices from public performances, for example, and sets many other conditions for music practices.[33] As Omoumi describes, "After the Arab invasion of Iran in 652CE, Persian music suffered a major recession, partly because the Muslim caliphs were against the music of any kind" (Arrival of Islam). He continues by mentioning "after the Arab invasion and the Safavid reign, the Islamic Revolution was the third period in which Persian music came to a complete standstill [for a few years]" (After 1979). The situation of music in the society from the lens of Islamic law is still unclear, and this is why music has an uncertain status in Iran.[34] I use this as an example of how a lack of transparency in turning religion into social law allows the governments to use religion as a cover-up for their hegemonial ideas, which lead to injustice.

While searching for poems, I was fascinated to see how the social issues raised by Ferdowsi's (940-1025) poetry can still be applied to today's society. Therefore, in this piece I

[33] See Siamdoust
[34] See Levine.

connect the past to the present, not only through the musical traditions referenced, but also by linking classical and contemporary Persian poetry, as well as quoting from the speeches of living African-American activist and scholar Angela Davis. Besides borrowing four couplets from Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâmeh*, I also use several lines of *Kâveh yâ Eskandar* a poem by Mehdi Akhavan-Sales (1929-1990), as well as selected lines of *Na Âvâ, Na Tarannom* a poem by Fereydoon Moshiri (1926-2000) (Ferdousi; Akhavan-Sales 105-109; Moshiri 37-38). I use vocalization techniques as a tool for evoking certain emotions or imitating the role of the voice in personal and social events, especially by inviting the Eclipse Quartet's musicians to use their voices to sing or recite. The music reflects on my personal sonic culture, and I avoided letting traditional norms set any boundaries for the creative process. Instead, I tried to narrate the story and facilitate the collaboration among the musicians through conscious use of my understanding of how meaning is conveyed through different musical traditions.

Instead of composing a multi-movement piece from scratch, after setting up the narrative—which was embedded in some of my previous compositions—I rearranged a few of my previous works while composing new pieces to produce *Diaspersity*. In the past three years, with each of my compositions, I have been reflecting on my personal experiences, and doing research on intercultural music making. This is why I was able to incorporate a few of my recent compositions into this larger work, with some rearrangements. Besides one of the string quartet movements, two of the pieces recorded by the members of Sibarg Ensemble were previous compositions of mine for improvisers. Another movement for Sibarg Ensemble was an existing composition by my collaborator and our pianist, Josh Charney, which we had performed in our live concerts. These pieces were already composed to reflect on my dissertation research, and each of them carried a personal or social story that I had encountered. Based on the narrative that

I had planned, I composed the other movements in the Fall of 2021, and the majority of recordings were done in late 2021 and early 2022. Since this was a multitrack recording and I mixed and mastered the work myself, the compositional process was continued until the last day of production. In the next section I will discuss each movement of *Diaspersity*, focusing on how they move along a post-intercultural path.

Intro: Concrete Music

For the very first sound of the piece, I used the sound of a knob that turns on a radio, followed by radio frequencies, as if one is searching to tune into a radio station. I have also layered several long tones played on kamancheh (Persian bowed string instrument), and some airy synthesizer sounds under those radio waves, which creates an atmospheric sonic environment. Since everyone has heard different types of music and programs on radio, I tried to embed this nostalgic sound into the introduction, so that the audience expects to hear any type of music or sound. Moreover, with this introduction I strive to evoke a sense of hybridity, by reminding the audience of how changing the radio stations may sound—traveling through various programs and types of music.

Darâmad

After a crescendo that ends the Intro, Darâmad for string quartet starts. This movement is a fully notated composition based on quintal harmony. My use of quintal harmony refers to how Hossein Alizadeh uses fifths in order to create a suitable harmony for his masterpiece, *ney nava* (sound of ney), which was written for a string ensemble and ney. In my research I also observed how Reza Vali also uses the idea of using quintal harmony to achieve a more organic harmony for the works he composes using melodies influenced by classical Persian music. Besides how Vali was influenced by Béla Bartók's music, which perhaps was the case for Alizadeh as well,

they also found the connection between quintal harmony and the modal system used in classical Persian music. In all the *dastgâh*s and *âvâz*es, there is always an open *gusheh* that has its central note a fourth or a fifth above the central note of *darâmad*. When moving from one *gusheh* to another, octave displacement is common, so the fourth or fifth intervals may be inverted similarly to how quintal harmony may function. Another connection can be found in the tuning of various Persian instruments, which are mostly tuned in fourths or fifths, and in many cases the use of open strings as pedal tone *vâkhoon* (drone) when playing a melody on another string is a common practice.

After several repetitions, the melodic motif of the first violin ends on a long high D and other musicians join by playing D in the same and lower octaves. In this section I tried to stretch a traditional melodic pattern that is found in all open *gusheh*s: repetition of a short note moving to a long tone, and usually it is an ascending movement (e.g. a short C# to a long D). This is why I had each of the instruments glissando from D to C# and then back to D at different times and with different durations while holding the D for a longer duration, so that it becomes the tonal center. While this section develops, I added some unexpected electronic noises in order to alarm the audience and surreptitiously signal the impending return of the radio sounds from the Intro. In order to prepare these sounds during the alternation between D and C#, the second violin plays pizzicati on high notes, which have less pitch and more noise. Gradually, the viola also joins the second violin playing pizzicato, while more of the white noise, distortions, and glitches combine with some noise of tuning the radio. Finally, this movement fades into the next section through the fast crescendo of the radio tuning noise layered on the low D played on cello, and pizzicato notes played by viola and second violin.

As is implied in its name, *darâmad* is the opening of *Diaspersity,* and the motif that I used is meant to set the opening theme, inspired by the beginning of *golhâ* and the way it had an opening theme song played by solo clarinet. In the composition process, I used my understanding of how traditional melodic patterns are developed in a classical Persian music performance, and instead of following a specific formal structure, I strove to develop the initial idea organically. Therefore, I developed the piece based on the structure of *dastgâh* or *âvâz*, in which there is always a *darâmad* (introduction) that moves to *oj* (climax) and finally arrives on *foroud* (descent). In this form, rather than thinking of each section separately and connecting them with transitions, there is always a sense of connectivity and development. Moreover, one can find many similarities between each section, while there are gradual shifts and new materials are added to an existing and developing background. This is where I find a common ground between classical Persian music and Western contemporary music, both of which focus on details of timbre, dynamics, and articulation.

News: Concrete Music

Fading in towards the end of Darâmad, this section is concrete music in which I sampled several recorded news and roundtable discussions from American TV programs, focused on immigration and diversity issues. By including various views all in one piece, and mixing them with news reports of the executive order signed in 2017 on immigration known as the travel ban, I begin to set the political narrative of this radio opera. Using various effects, and adding distorted sounds or glitches heard in radio signals, I imitate how we receive so much information on various topics from social media and how, through censorship, news agencies shape our understanding of cultural, social, and political issues. Mentioning the travel ban, and how diversity is perceived in the US, reflects upon my personal life as an immigrant who has been

affected by these political and social actions and mindsets. This movement concludes with excerpts from Angela Davis's speech in which she challenges the current system of promoting diversity.

> What is the point of endorsing race and gender diversity within a framework that remains heteropatriarchal at its core. We always seem primed to celebrate individual advancements of black people, people of color, women without taking into consideration that diversity by itself may simply mean that previously marginalized individuals have been recruited to get to a more efficient operation of oppressive systems. (00:02:10 - 00:04:40)

A difference that doesn't make a difference

The next track was based on a quote by Angela Davis on diversity, and includes an excerpt from her speech on the same topic, as well. By saying, "I have a hard time accepting diversity as a synonym for justice. Diversity is a corporate strategy" (Eckert), Davis challenges the current practice of promoting diversity, which is tied to the concept of "Mcdonaldization" in intercultural music making. This is why I set the song using a Persian interjection, *vâveylâ*, which is generally used to express a negative feeling caused by an act or event. The song is composed based on my understanding of blues, gospel, and rock and roll musical traditions. Although in these traditions words may be manipulated by the vocalist's pronunciation, I tend to pronounce the words so they can be heard clearly, which has roots in classical Persian music. Since the importance of text and its meaning is the primary consideration, in some parts I use vocalizations to highlight the feelings that are evoked by Davis's speech.

Although the bassline, the chord changes, the melody played by the keyboard towards the end, and the outro are written out, all the musicians are given the chance to improvise in different parts of the piece, which turns this track into a structured improvisation. After the last verse is sung, the keyboard plays a simple melody, which I composed inspired by traditional melodic

patterns found in the *radif*, with special attention to how the concept of *foroud* is used for concluding a melody. The ending of this melody doesn't mark the ending of the track; rather, I extend the ending by bringing back the term *vâveylâ*, this time in a 5/4 meter and in an ascending line, and finish the piece on an A that is held for over two measures by the vocalists.

Imaginary Reality

Starting with a sustained high A on violin, Imaginary Reality fades in at the end of A difference that doesn't make a difference, which makes a smooth transition between the two. This track is a relatively long string quartet movement that lasts approximately 9 minutes, allowing the audience to absorb and personalize what they have experienced up to this point. The sustained soft tones, and the rests in between them with unexpected durations, create an atmosphere that invites the listener to focus on expanding the narrative in their minds, especially after raising a complex sociopolitical issue through Angela Davis's words. I strive to encourage the audience to think critically and zoom into the words they have heard, and go beyond them in their imaginations. Similarly, I came up with the pitch material for this track through spectral analysis of a single pitch. Moreover, I strive to replace the words with a single pitch, as well as replacing the idea of going beyond the meaning of the words in one's imaginations with zooming in to a single pitch and looking into its spectrum. I used the Overtone Analyzer application to analyze a single G that I sang and recorded, and I used the higher partials that appear to be more present in my voice (see fig. 13).

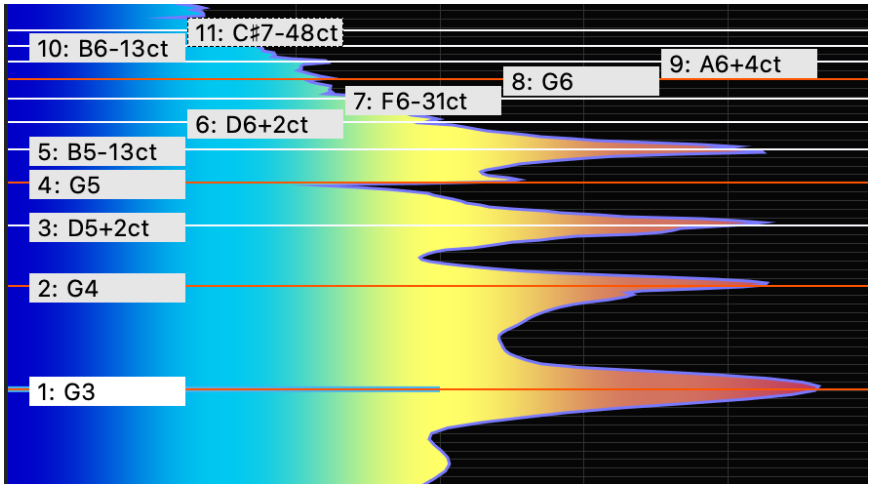


Fig. 13. Spectral analysis of G3: you can see how up to the 11th partials appear to be present in the sound.

Since G3 was the lowest G I could sing, and the cello has an open string tuned on G2, when composing this piece, I decided to transpose the analysis shown in figure 12 an octave lower. Therefore, the C#7, which is the 11th harmonic, became the 22nd harmonic. Although intonation in classical Persian music is not based on the harmonic series, one can find a connection between the two through the higher harmonics. For example, the 11th harmonic—the same pitch class as the 22nd harmonic—is 49 cents flatter than notes on a keyboard, which creates a ¾ step interval between the 11th and 12th harmonics. This ¾ step is an interval that is used in many tetrachords and pentachords in classical Persian music. In addition, the 13th harmonic is 41 cents sharper, and that creates a 5/4 step interval between the 13th and 15th harmonics, which is another interval used in classical Persian music. Therefore, I focused on these partials while using the 7th and 14th partials among other harmonics of G, to create the harmonic space in this movement. The goal was to create a neutral sonic space in which intervals are purely created naturally without giving deference to any musical traditions. Finally, towards the end of this movement, I start introducing a minor second interval that the piano uses later to

start the next track. This is when I start introducing more tones that are not necessarily part of the G harmonics, and prepare the audience for the next section to begin.

Intro to Shâhnâmeh

An improvisation, mainly driven by the piano accompanied by bass and voice, sets an introductory space for End of Shâhnâmeh, which reflects on the sociopolitical issues that have been the center of discussions on human rights and law in Iran. End of Shâhnâmeh describes hopelessness from the lense of a chaotic land where things are not functioning as they should and everything is misplaced. This is why the aim of this intro is to create a chaotic space; the fast and intense piano improvisations along with the vocalizations reflect on the frustration and the anger caused by this chaos. The piano improvisation was recorded first, and then the bass and vocals lines were overdubbed. During the editing process, I used hard panning on the voice to add more disruption to the piece.

End of Shâhnâmeh

End of Shâhnâmeh is a composition for improvisers composed by Sibarg Ensemble's pianist, Josh Charney, for which I selected parts of two different poems as lyrics. This is one of the very few works that was an instrumental composition at first, with space left for the vocalist to improvise, and I chose the poem later. Normally with Sibarg Ensemble, we compose works based on a selected poem or text. Charney's idea was to have a rhythmic and energetic vocal solo on top of the bassline he provided, and he was interested in a hip-hop style of singing. The dramatic melody that Charney had written for the ending created possibilities for narrating an expressive story. After I heard the complete composition, and especially the repeated melody of the ending, I was immediately reminded of a form of Iranian dramatic performance, *naqqâli* (storytelling), in which stories in the form of poems are recounted accompanied by movement,

music, and painted scrolls (naqqāli). Because of its formal structure and narrative, Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâmeh* is one of the most relevant poetry collections for *naqqâli*. This is why I selected several lines of a relatively large poem *Kâveh yâ Eskandar* from a collection by contemporary Iranian poet Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, which he wrote in continuation of, and inspired by, Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâmeh*, and named *Âkhar-e Shâhnâmeh* (End of Shâhnâmeh). Below I provide the selected lines of this poem translated by my dear friend, Babak Mazloumi.

The waves have gone to sleep, lull and subdued
The storm is not drumming

The blazing fountains have dried up
There is neither news nor noises

In the non-throbbing of the necropolis
Even one can't hear an owl's hoot

Mute and stifled, The Wretched of the Earth
Stifled and mute, the wrathful

All stories have been buried
Under an eternal silence

The sighs losing their ways in chests
The birds hiding their heads under their wings

The gallows have been removed, the blood have been washed away

The house was empty, and the landlord had no food or water
And there was nothing left to write home about

I perform this poem in two different sections, which are divided by a short keyboard solo. The bassline is in 11/4, and after the keyboard solo the same pattern is transposed a fifth higher while the vocal becomes more active and the verses are performed faster. Similar to *naqqâli*, the poem is recited expressively and dramatically through use of dynamic shifts and articulations. I also sing some parts of the poem to express the meaning of the text. Taking this approach allows me to highlight the importance of the meaning of the poem while poetically performing the story. Because poetry is a significant part of classical Persian music, formal structures of intonation and traditional melodic patterns should be used to express the meaning of the poem. Expanding the

traditional patterns must also be welcomed when it facilitates the delivery of the meaning. This is how I connect to tradition in order to cultivate liberating possibilities. While I draw on traditional values—in this case the importance of poetry and its meaning—I liberate the process of creation from traditional boundaries, aiming to focus on improving the sonic realization of the main fundamental purpose of the musical tradition. Following the same philosophy, I used intonations other than equal temperament in Imaginary Reality for string quartet.

After the rhythmic section is over, an improvised duo starts with oud and voice. For this section I used a few lines of Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâmeh*, which can still be applied to today's Iranian society. Below I provide these selected lines translated by Babak Mazloumi:

They hide all the treasures
They strive not yielding their achievements to the foe

No faith has remained in this world
The tongues and souls are brimming with tyranny

They shed blood for the worldly gains
Bad times seem halcyon

They seek their own profit at the expense of others
Using "religion" as their pretext

The last couplet sets the relevant space for the female voice to sing the dramatic repeated ending melody line, especially since in Iran solo female voice is not permitted for public performances except for concerts that are open to female audience only. Because End of Shâhnâmeh is not the end of *Diaspersity*, the final melody sung by the female vocalist has a dual function. While previously sung texts make the final melody sound sorrowful, it may also remind the audience of hope for a brighter future. This duality is what I hope to achieve so that the audience may create their own narratives.

176

Starting with a gradual crescendo right at the end of the previous track, 176 is a work for voice, hand drum and computer. The formal structure of the piece is inspired by Shia mourning rituals. In these religious ceremonies including funerals, a male religious singer known as *maddah* (eulogist) sings, and in some occasions an individual or a group of drummers accompany him playing a repetitive rhythm. I found this form effective, especially because in this piece I read out the first names of 176 victims of the Ukrainian flight that was shot down by two missiles shortly after takeoff from Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport in January 2020. The piece starts with the hand drum playing a simple and repetitive rhythmic idea in 4/4, and the voice comes in reading out the names of the victims with no pauses in between.

Here I used a Max patch originally programmed by Christopher Dobrian, which is designed to be used during a live performance, and I made some adjustments so that it plays back the vocals and the drums with delay and added echo. The use of echo during a *maddahi* (what the *maddah* does) is common, especially because it helps with projecting the sound while also adding to the dramatic expression through its timbral effects. In *maddahi* they use a constant and relatively short echo. This patch, however, allows the computer to record ten seconds of sound into its buffer, randomly selects parts of the recording, and also determines the length of the delay time to apply while echoing those delayed playbacks. The computer starts recording as soon as the piece starts, and it takes ten seconds for the computer to record its first track, and then after ten seconds it starts to play back different parts of the recording with various lengths. After every ten seconds of recording, the computer stops recording for ten seconds, and then it starts recording again. This was another way for me to break the constant delay and randomize the possibility of what parts of the text may be played back with delay. A different process was

applied to the drum part. The length of the delay on the hand drum gradually increases until they are two beats apart, and then it decreases to a sixteenth note for the ending when the next track gradually fades in. Towards the end, the live vocal stops, and what remains on top of the drums is the playback of the last vocal recording, which fades out gradually.

I expand the use of delay and echo, and move beyond its traditional use in *maddahi*, because I strive to create a sense of vertigo by singing all these names and layering them with delay and echo. Ultimately, the intensity increases and creates a sonic space where the sounds of these names become the music that narrates a tragic story. This is why in the next track I expand on this unfortunate tragedy.

#PS752

In continuation of the previous track, #PS752 is a narrative of the Ukrainian flight. For the program note of this string quartet movement I wrote:

> This piece is a narrative of a lingering wrath which has been weaved inside us and the wishful thinking to ward it off tantamount with a permanent pain… Among the grief of loss, the agony of loneliness, the pain of despair, and the fear that an accident would happen again, this is the wrath that will stay with the society becoming older and older… The sound you are to hear starts moments before this wrath comes into existence and lasts until the questions that are left unanswered are slaughtered and what has been said and written are buried alive. Hence, it will just leave us with a woeful whisper which will linger there until we lose consciousness, a sound which ends up as a lullaby for a traveler who will never reach their destination…

Therefore, the piece starts with a melody that I first improvised on setar (Persian plucked string instrument). The melody is in *darâmad* of *shur* (one of the seven *dastgâh*s), but it doesn't end on the final note nor on the central note. While I was inspired by the traditional melodic patterns that are used for *darâmad* of *shur*, I expanded the rhythmic language of the melody in order to turn it into an introduction that sets expectations for more material to come. The melody itself is divided into two phrases, and is played by the first violin four times. Every time, there

are some audible timbral changes through shifts in articulations and dynamics. Additionally, by using delay and changing the amount of feedback of the echo, I imitate the *sâz-o-âvâz* performance tradition, while adding more timbral variety to evoke a sense of vertigo and absence. As I mentioned in the second chapter, *sâz-o-âvâz* works directly with the memory of the performer who plays what the vocalist has sung with a slight delay and after the vocalist is done; the instrumental expands the vocalist's singing through playing variations of the melody. The duo part in *sâz-o-âvâz* performance is pretty similar to how teachers practice the *radif* with their students. While the teacher sings a *gusheh*, the students imitate their teacher with a slight delay, which leads to creation of a canon. Therefore, I use delay both in the previous track, 176, and this track to reflect on the importance of remembering this tragedy, and how this memory may have affected our lives. It evokes a sense of absence, as if it is a nightmare that stays with the victims' loved ones forever.

The complete melody is played once by the first violin alone, and the second time through the second violin joins by playing the rhythm of the melody only on the open G string. The third time, viola and cello join by playing similarly to the second violin but with different pitches. For the last repetition of the melody, by playing double stops, the cello plays both the melody and the rhythm on an open string. This harmonization is inspired by how on a setar, when striving to play with a louder dynamic and to achieve a fuller sound world, the performer plucks all the strings including the one on which the melody is played. This is similar to using *vâkhoon*, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter. The first section of the piece ends with an ascending glissando merged with a fast crescendo in the highest registers of all the four instruments. Hearing a grating sound for a few seconds depicts the second when the tragedy happened, and after that moment the anger starts to develop. For this section I use secundal

harmony to create dissonance in the higher register, to blend anger and everlasting sorrow. To express such feelings I also use delay and echo with feedback loops in part of these sections, which are designed to be used in a live performance setting as well.

The second section remains mainly in the higher register of the instruments, with loud dynamics. Using the secundal harmony allows me to recall a sense of the opening melody, creating its arch in a chromatic space. Therefore, the development of this section is mainly based on the arch of the opening melody, although it may sound radically different compared to the first section. After landing on a held four-note chromatic chord, the second section ends and the last section of this movement starts with the cello holding a D with a soft dynamic. The last section of the piece is a lullaby I wrote in *darâmad* of *shur*, the same *gusheh* that was used for the first section. Here I create a canonic delay by having different players play the lullaby starting at different times, on top of a two-note ostinato played by the cello. The lullaby is a personal song that "creates a bond between the mother and child" through "simple melodies" and words (*Master SIMA BINA*, 00:01:40 - 00:02:00). Especially for Iranians, the lullaby carries social and political statements, since the female voice is not permitted in a concert. I conclude this movement with a lullaby as a mourning song; I ask the performers to sing and play the lullaby, especially because having the lullaby sung by untrained vocalists connects it to its core intention and origin.

In both 176 and #PS752 I utilize delay and echo effects in various ways in order to set a tragic and sorrowful narrative. As I mentioned, delay is embedded both in pedagogy and practice of classical Persian music, and other musical cultures that I have encountered also incorporate delay in one way or another. Delay is directly related to memory, which connects us to the past. Yet, the modification of different parameters of delay as an effect—such as the duration, speed,

and the rate at which the sound is played back—opens up possibilities for evolution of the memorized sound. Therefore I find the use of delay helps me to move along a post-intercultural path, as it refers to the past while also being a path to the future, as it reveals the conversion process of sounds in time, and introduces new sonic possibilities rooted in the past sonic events.

Rim Bara Bebop

After the preceding narration of an unfortunate and tragic event, this track starts with an active dance-like rhythm section. Rim Bara Bebop is an attempt to bring Persian and Afro-American dance music together, reminding the audience about how life will go on, despite everything we all go through. For this purpose, I have two contrasting sections in this piece, one of which appears in the middle of the song with a slow pace and in rubato style. This is why I didn't use any texts or poems, so that the music remains as abstract as possible.

O n O r W y

This is the fourth and last string quartet in this radio opera, which is an attempt to imitate sounds of revolution heard from faraway. The rhythmic motif that I use throughout this piece is based on a Persian poetic rhythm, which is generated from four repetitions of the syllable combination short-short-long-short-long,[35] which is written using "ᴗ" for short and "-" for long, as follows:

ᴗ ᴗ - ᴗ - / ᴗ ᴗ - ᴗ - / ᴗ ᴗ - ᴗ - / ᴗ ᴗ - ᴗ -

If the long syllables were to be divided into two short syllables, then each combination would include seven short syllables. This shows how using a musical meter in seven fits this poetic rhythm, so I used 7/8 meter for this movement. After a gradual introduction of this rhythm, I used a melody played by the first violin to establish this rhythmic ostinato. Soon after,

[35] In Persian, syllables are divided into short, long, and extra long. The poetic rhythms are generated by combinations of these syllables and the repetition or mixture of these combinations. See (Elwell-Sutton).

all the performers start to whisper syllables that are drawn from random Persian words, which I set to the rhythmic ostinato that they are performing on their instruments. The aim is to imitate the chants of protesters in the streets, so I use broken words that don't have meaning yet will sound familiar to ears of those who can speak Persian. I also added some defined words into the mix, so the Persian-speaking audience can recognize some of the spoken words here and there. For non-Persian speakers, the timbral quality of the piece along with the chant-like recitations may represent the desire of coming together for a common purpose.

Towards the end of this movement, I stretch the rhythmic motif and slow down the pace of the groove, which is a way for the piece to fade out. In the last seconds of this movement only an E played by the cello is heard. The transition between “O n O r W y” and the next track starts by using a Max patch for creating random harmonics of a pitch. I mix the E played on cello with its harmonics played by the computer as sine waves. “Harmonics48” is a patch programmed by Christopher Dobrian that selects random harmonics of a given fundamental frequency and fades them in and out while layering them. The timbral quality of these sine waves connects the end of this radio opera to its beginnings; it represents a more polished version of the radio waves we hear in the beginning of the whole work.

City is a Swamp

The continuation of random harmonics of E is merged with the random harmonics of D which is the central note of the last track. Since the high partials of every pitch are shared, I use the higher harmonics of E and D to create this transition. Thereafter, I establish the D with a crescendo, and this introductory section ends with some distortions I created by alternately turning the volume of the sine waves on and off very fast. This is yet another way of referring to the earlier parts of the piece before the last song starts.

City is a Swamp is a composition based on selected lines of *Na Âvâ, Na Tarannom* (no voice, no song) a poem by Fereydoon Moshiri, translated to English by Babak Mazloumi:

The city is a swamp, it's breathless, the voices are lost
There is absolute silence, no voice, no song

There is no loophole to a dawn, coming from faraway
There is no window for the morning, to smile at us

No hand appears holding, a librating sentence
Nor a forgiving God, having mercy on us

With all the hopelessness, depression, and darkness
With all the brutalities, tyranny, and aggressions

Like a sea, one day, this suppressed land
Would be all roaring, tempestuous, and crying

Although the text starts by describing a city as a swamp, the last couplet envisions a transformation yet to happen. This is why the piece starts with sound painting of the key adjectives used in the first few lines of the poem, such as swamp, breathless, absolute silence, and hopelessness. After short, intense, and aggressive free improvisations to sonically represent a swamp, the silence and hopelessness is expressed through improvising around the D (central note), and introducing its higher harmonics, which turns into a sonic cue for silence. The vocals freely improvise on top of this canvas created by the ensemble, and the first three couplets are sung rubato while the oud solos in between the verses create *sâz-o-âvâz* (call and response) form. At the end of this part, the rhythm section including piano, bass, and drums start setting a groove in 4/4. In the second part of the track, which is a rhythmic and song-like composition, the last two couplets are sung, expressing the hope for a change to come.

Musical and Social Influences

While I have been influenced by the importance of poetry and its meaning in classical Persian musical tradition, I have been also inspired by how songs rooted in African-American traditions and practices have lyrics of hope, especially in the areas of spiritual and gospel music. In both of these cultures, texts are often used as carriers of hope for liberation through symbolism and codes. Therefore, in these musical cultures the meaning of the texts are the main inspiration for the music making process. The music is meant to bring the people in these communities together and motivate them to stay hopeful, so it also functions as a mental wellness strategy. This is why songs or *tasnif*s, which have consistent rhythmic and formal structures, are the most common musical form in these communities. Although discussing symbolism in Persian poetry and codified protest songs in African-American communities could be a substantial research project by itself, in the next two paragraphs I will briefly discuss two examples of these strategies.

African American spirituals, or codified protest songs, are rooted in religious folk songs mostly associated with the dark slavery era in America, especially in the southern states. Similar to work songs, these are songs with constant rhythm and meter that are energetic and are performed in call and response form. “Steal away to to Jesus,” composed by Wallis Willis is an example of this type of music, and as it is stated in an article published on the Library of Congress website:

> Songs such as "Steal away to Jesus," [were] being seen by some commentators as incitements to escape slavery. Because the Underground Railroad of the mid- nineteenth century used terminology from railroads as a secret language for assisting slaves to freedom, it is often speculated that songs like "I got my ticket" may have been a code for escape.

Musicians like Nina Simone use similar strategies to codify liberating meanings in their lyrics using symbolism that is embedded in their community's culture, a technique which can be also traced in Persian poetry.

"Persian literature is essentially symbolic" (Seyed-Gohrab 1). Metaphoric use of various phenomena such as wine and wine-bearer are a common practice, especially in classical Persian poetry.[36] *Morgh-e sahar* (Bird of Dawn), is the most famous *tasnif* (song) among the Iranian society. It was composed by Morteza Neydavoud based on a poem by Mohammad-Taghi Bahar, and was recorded for the first time in 1927. The song was a reaction to the dictatorial regime of the time, and hoped for the bird of dawn to arise and end the darkness of night. Throughout the poem, the bird is the symbol of hope which has been caged, and Bahar envisions a day when this bird can be freed. After close to a century, this song still resonates with Iranians around the world, and several versions of it have been performed and recorded by various vocalists. This metaphoric use of the bird allows the song to resonate with generations to come, and opens up the possibility for the listener to connect the song with various events and stories in their imagination.

Beside the metaphoric meanings carried through the text in both Persian poetry and African-American spirituals, I have also been inspired by poetic rhythms found in classical Persian music and the irregular rhythms that can be derived from them. Similarly, the irregular rhythms and complex rhythmic patterns used in jazz have had a large impact on my creative work, and can be heard in several tracks of *Diaspersity*. In addition to poetry, the tradition of structured improvisation which can be found both in Persian music and jazz has also been a source of inspiration. Although *Diaspersity* was recorded from distance and without the

[36] Read the collection of essays on this topic in "Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry" edited by Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab.

musicians getting together (except for the Eclipse Quartet), by sending recordings back and forth between the musicians of Sibarg Ensemble, we kept the improvisatory parts of the tracks alive. The focus on structured improvisation allowed me to bring various musicians together to narrate a story while letting each individual express their own take on the story. It also made it possible for the ensemble to create a common ground through making timbral and motivic connections with one another. Even though I carefully notated all the details of the string quartet movements, for the third and fourth movements I asked them to take an improvisatory approach when playing parts of these pieces. While they had fully notated information, I invited them to improvise while keeping the overall arch of the melodies, meters, dynamics, and articulations. With this approach, I strove to imitate how one may improvise based on a closed *gusheh*.

My studies and research in Western contemporary music have led me toward expanding the use of timbre as an effective tool in the composition process. Inspired by this artistic strategy, I have been looking for sounds that can express my thoughts, regardless of their origin and source. Although *tahrir* itself is a vocalization technique, in classical Persian music the voice is only used for singing conventional melodies. Drawing from my background in Western contemporary music, and by expanding the concept of *tahrir* as a vocalization technique, as a vocalist I use my voice in different ways to express the narrative. Whether it is through singing a conventional melody, or imitating a noise or a conversation between various people, I use my instrument to convey meanings without aiming to represent any specific musical traditions. I also take the same approach when using a computer to generate or edit existing sounds. As I explained earlier in this chapter, I was inspired by the theories of concrete music, which encouraged me to produce a radio opera. Schaeffer's idea of reduced listening allowed me to separate the sound from its source, which helps me to distinguish using tradition as a source from

attempting to represent a tradition. In an intercultural music performance, when the visual cues are eliminated, the sound will be the only component that can connect the audience with a certain tradition, and there is no expectation of what comes next or what sounds we may hear next, especially because the source is not visible.

Delay is a tool that I have worked with in all of the musical traditions that I have studied. From *sâz-o-âvâz* to Western canons, to call and response in African-American music, delay is a frequently used concept to express various states of mind. Technology allows me to go beyond the traditional use of delay in music. By adjusting different components that create the delay, I have found more sonic possibilities for presenting my ideas. Searching for more ways of utilizing computer generated delay has encouraged me to experiment with expanding the ways in which delay is created acoustically, as well. This is why I took different approaches to sections of *Diaspersity* that incorporated *sâz-o-âvâz*. Finally, as my experimentation with delay is also connected to the importance of timbre, the computer—and more specifically utilizing delay—allowed me to expand the timbral content of my creative project and enrich its expressiveness.

A Summary

By removing all visual cues and by making reference to selected horrifying events, *Diaspersity* reminds the audience of the important social, political, and cultural issues that are related to hegemony and power dynamics. Both of these concepts may be discussed from different perspectives and in various disciplines. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have focused on how an intercultural music collaboration may be improved so that it results in liberating the outcome from the dominance of a tradition. Moreover, I seek to avoid any

hegemonial approaches. Whether this hegemony is created by corporations, institutions, or conservatism, it results in marginalizing creative ideas as hegemony is rooted in the taxonomy of things. It is important to study every tradition in its historic context and look into the intentions and the results of its social and political effects. In the first chapter I discussed how, compared to Western contemporary music, jazz has been a more welcoming space for intercultural collaboration for Persian music and musicians, without explicitly imposing any of its cultural values. Yet, I also explained how Reza Vali has been successfully creating a balanced intercultural dialogue between Western contemporary music and Persian music. Therefore, earlier in this chapter I focused on the importance of elucidating the intention of an intercultural music collaboration, by considering the story of the collaborators and the collaboration itself. Since we are focusing on intercultural collaborations—in which two or more cultures and traditions are involved—historical, social, political, and economical factors consciously or unconsciously affect the music making process. I believe the story behind the collaboration becomes the most important part of the analysis process. Yet, its combination with a detailed musical analysis is needed for a fructuous conclusion.

Because this dissertation is creativity-based research, recapitulating all prior detailed social and political analysis of intercultural collaborations is out of the scope and duration of this project. Yet, I endeavor to point out the ongoing discussions related to the field, with a focus on Iranian diaspora and American academia. I discussed the issues concerning cultural hegemony, which is not limited to the ongoing struggle between Western and Eastern cultures. I mentioned how these hegemonial approaches exist within a specific culture and society, by examining the history of music pedagogy in modern Iran. I also touched on how, in many cases, exoticism is unwittingly promoted by musicians coming from lesser known cultures, mainly because of how

American corporations and institutions utilize intercultural music for their own profit. Additionally, I discussed a major difference existing between intercultural music collaborations in Iran and its diaspora, which is the promotion of inclusiveness versus modernization. Ultimately, I strive to envision a more neutral intercultural collaboration, which allows liberation from norms and boundaries set by traditions and cultures on a personal level. In order to create such collaborations, musicians need to develop a deep understanding of the musical traditions they are referencing, and their social and political implications, while liberating their work from simply promoting a fixed identity. I suggest that a genuine intercultural music dialogue is the path to becoming, rather than a product. Therefore, there is no one way, or one theory, for practicing a liberating intercultural music. This is why, instead of suggesting a concrete musical practice, I pointed out several important issues existing in the intercultural music scene, gave a detailed description of my own background story and intentions, and discussed my journey of producing *Diaspersity* as a creative project that reflects on my research and visions for a more personal intercultural music making.

In the section on "Musical and Social Influences," I explained how I have been inspired by core elements of various musical traditions. I also expanded on how I strive to move beyond simply utilizing these core elements, so that I don't end up with representing a fixed identity. Here the hope is to create possibilities for intercultural collaboration through finding common ground between core conceptual foundations of different musical traditions. It is also important to search for how their differences may be turned into possibilities for expressing complex narratives. For example, the importance of timbre in Western contemporary music, mixed with the ways text is used in Persian music and jazz, facilitates dramatic narration of stories through sound. Personalizing our understanding of various musical cultures and traditions is the key to

moving from identifying to becoming. At times *Diaspersity* may remind the audience of a specific musical tradition, but it doesn't aim to represent these traditions as fixed sonic identities, so the experience is more similar to the way each listener recalls the past in their imagination. The music is connected to the past, and as a recording, it is not being performed in the present moment, yet it does affect the emotions and thoughts in the present, which shapes the future. Its sonic effect is not about identifying that past, rather it is about what it is becoming. Ultimately, as opposed to representing fixed and existing sonic identities, which we know of as musical traditions, this music facilitates a path to liberation from set values. *Diaspersity* is an example of how, in a post-intercultural path, the process of creation becomes the core of the project. Rather than focusing on the product and how it can be labeled or whom it may satisfy, it is the story of collaborators and the collaboration process and ultimately the intention that delineates the core of this musical practice. Despite the method of delivery—whether through fully notated composition, or improvisation, or concrete music pieces—or how the roles are distributed in the music making process, *Diaspersity* seeks to avoid deference to a specific tradition. The main connection between the tracks and musical traditions is through the philosophy of how meanings are conveyed in these traditions. The rest of the creation process is focused on the background of the musicians and the narrative.

A post-intercultural path suggests that a more nuanced intercultural music making is a practice that keeps evolving and doesn't turn to a fixed sonic identity. Therefore it is not about developing a personal language, rather it is about allowing oneself to open up to possibilities for dynamic collaborations. Producing *Diaspersity* encouraged me to let go of the traditions I have been holding onto so dearly, especially in the music making process, while searching for the core foundations of these musical traditions. This is why I am interested in continuing my research

and creative work by studying and analyzing the connection between extramusical and musical elements of different traditions. In the next chapter I introduce two future directions in which I may take this work, aiming to explore the post-intercultural path.

Chapter 4: A Path to Becoming

Introduction

During this research project, I have learned how to turn my disappointments into possibilities more than I have ever before. As I explained in the introduction, I founded Sibarg Ensemble in order to resist the existing class differentiation between Iranian musicians, which leads to persistent cultural hegemony. I have also moved away from being primarily a pianist, since I was disappointed by how I was treated as a Iranian pianist with a foreign accent. I chose UC Irvine for my graduate studies, because I realized that I am not interested in being identified with a specific style or label. While stylistic choices and labels are unavoidable, I would prefer to take a fluid approach when it comes to stylistic choices, in which the style doesn't restrict the creative process. Rather, I borrow from various styles as needed in order to sonically represent an idea or a story. This approach moves away from representing a fixed identity and allows for more liberation both for the musicians and listeners.

I am troubled by how cultural hegemony is preserved through not only the preeminence of the dominant culture but also the actions that minoritized people take in order to blend into the hegemonial systems. The idea of a post-intercultural path may be a reaction to this frustration, but it also reframes hope for change through exploring existing scholarships and practices that call for emancipation. In this chapter I will introduce two ideas that I hope to shape in the future as extensions of this dissertation research.

Sonic Futurity

By drawing on this dissertation I hope to expand my research focusing on the sonic futurity of the Iranian-American community. I am conceptualizing *sonic futurity* as soundscapes that are resulting from musical and aural practices, where the word *futurity* focuses on possibilities rather than fixed identities, and on becoming as opposed to identifying. My compositions will still move along a post-intercultural path, and I hope to demonstrate how intersections of Persian and African-American musical cultures may become the starting point of a sonic evolution. My ultimate goal is to introduce a creative space in which musicians focus on their personal stories of resistance against cultural hegemony. This is where musicians' awareness of various traditions may turn to a collective liberation from formal, social, and cultural obligations.

Music has been a significant tool for the Iranian-American community not only to enrich their own community but also to cross-pollinate with other cultures. Iranian musicians and audiences have perceived jazz as a "universal music expression," and found its improvised nature to be a mutual component with Persian music (Nooshin 145). I hope to extend my research into this cross-pollination by investigating the connection between codified songs and symbolism in Persian poetry and music, which I briefly discussed in Chapter 3. After the 1979 Islamic revolution and the imposition of restrictions for musical activities by the government, music production and education declined in Iran for about two decades, and many musicians left the country. Even today, the Iranian-American music scene is the main driving force for the living musicians in Iran, and the influence of this scene on music in modern Iran is difficult to overstate (Youssefzadeh 39). Musicians like myself have experienced living in a minority where they were born and raised as well as where they emigrated. Yet, with a growing number of

emerging artists moving to the United States, we are witnessing some community-based activism. For example, IFCA (Iranian Female Composer Association) is one of these organizations that has been striving to empower the emerging Iranian women-identifying musicians in the US (Ebright). I will be looking into both community-based and creative projects that such organizations or individuals shape, in order to create a bridge between the past and future of the Iranian-American community.

Machine Learning, The Sequence of Possibilities

Often electronic/computer music is associated with Western musical culture. There are several reasons behind this assumption but I will focus on two main ones. 1) The creation of computers is seen as a Western phenomenon, which is why most of the computer-generated ideas, products, and systems are associated with the West. 2) Western artists were initially much more open to the idea of using computers in their creative works, which was part of the modernization movement and felt more organic within their musical culture. However, advancement of technology has been a global effort, and scientists and philosophers around the world have taken part in this advancement by contributing to the field. This is why computers should be seen as a universal cultural phenomenon, one that doesn't only represent or serve a certain group of people based on their regions. On the other hand, in the Western countries technology has been more accessible and has grown much faster than in most of the Eastern countries. This is why the culture embedded in technology is relatively a Western one and as a result, it might be perceived by many people as a threat to Eastern cultures. In this project, the computer is conceived as a neutral phenomenon that carries its own unique culture, without any nationalities. Moreover, I am suggesting to think of the computer as a culture that has its own set

of rules, traditions, potentials, and in some cases its own intentions. This will put computers alongside Persian music, jazz, Western contemporary music, etc. As a creator, my life has been influenced by computers, however until not too long ago, I was using computers in an 'exotic way' meaning that I hadn't spent enough time learning and understanding this diverse culture.

While I explored the use of computer-generated delay in *Diaspersity*, I have been also looking into the possibility of using Machine Learning (ML) in order to improve computer-based intercultural music making. ML algorithms are one technique for creating artificial intelligence. In ML, instead of explicitly programming a conventional algorithm to operate an assigned task, one can provide sample data that the computer can learn from in a "training phase". The trained ML model is then able to analyze, make decisions, predict, or generate new data in an "inference phase". Machine Learning algorithms automatically extract and understand features and patterns that are important for making decisions or predictions, by building mathematical models based on the training data. Generally, ML methods are classified into three categories: Supervised Learning, Unsupervised Learning, and Reinforcement Learning. However, there are methods, which don't fit into only one of the above categories and are usually mixed or hybrid. In supervised learning, the machine is provided with labeled training data (inputs and desired outputs). The model is expected to extract the rules from the input-output pairs. In Unsupervised Learning, the given data is not labeled. Here the main goal for the model is to find a structure in data on its own, with minimum human-supervision and extract hidden patterns that are meaningful in the context. Reinforcement Learning models receive feedback—such as a "reward" value—from dynamic interactions with the environment, and try to find a successful strategy that maximizes the reward.

Often in computer music supervised learning is employed as a tool for analysis, but for the purpose of this research, unsupervised learning seems to be more effective. Here the idea is to turn the computer into a neutral cultural phenomenon and include it in the creative process as a determinative member. Using the Max object *ml.markov* allows the computer to create compositional materials such as melodic and rhythmic ideas after providing it with some excerpts from the *radif* as the input data. *ml.markov* is one of the objects in the *ml.star* package, which includes unsupervised learning model objects for MAX/MSP. Unlike prevalent supervised models in computer music that require a heavy training phase to converge to a suitable tolerance, unsupervised learning models are adaptive and additive, meaning they learn during interactions incrementally. "Unsupervised algorithms arguably map well to models of human perception and are self-organizing, being able to function without any external intervention" (Smith 1). This is the way for us to let the machine learn on its own, like a human, yet without biased intervention or specification.

ml.markov is created based on a popular ML technique used in computer music, which has a lot of potential for creativity. "A Markov chain is a stochastic model describing a sequence of possible events in which the probability of each event depends on the state(s) attained in the previous event(s)" (Upton and Cook). Then at each state, the chain works with a set of probabilities and makes predictions on future states independently from the state history of the process (Benson). I have been interested in providing the *ml.markov* with different takes on one *gusheh*, and letting it compute the chance that any given sequence of notes is followed by another note or sequence. Ultimately, it will generate new melodies based on the learning process, and it can be used as compositional materials in various ways. I have run some

experiments using this Max object, and I hope to expand this project further, as there is much more to explore in this field.

A Short Summary

The idea of a post-intercultural path emerged out of my investigation into how an intercultural collaboration may lead to a liberating experience that focuses on becoming as opposed to identifying. *Diaspersity* sets an example of how this concern may be addressed through composition, improvisation, and technology. Its polystylistic formation allows it to move beyond prioritizing a certain tradition or style. And finally, it invites the listener to focus on the sound despite the cultural and social stories that the sound objects carry with them. Ultimately, the intention of taking a post-intercultural path, is to allow musicians to free their creative process from representing fixed identities through respecting and researching existing traditions. Whether it is through my creative works, writings, teaching, or community engagements, I strive to create a collaborative space for shaping a conversation around the ideas that I have explored in this dissertation. A post-intercultural path is not a style or label, nor is it a musical practice, so it is impossible to theorize this concept fully solely in this essay or in one creative work. This is a path to becoming, and requires constant exploration.

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APPENDIX

Full recording of *Diaspersity* and the scores can be found on:

https://www.hesamabedini.com/diaspersity