

The Celebration event of “*Gulhā*”



Jamileh Kharrazi

From the end of the twentieth-century, the Iranian society; gradually, found a special determination to flourish and be proud. Poetry, theatre, paintings and even classical music of Iran was in motion towards a new age. In order to survive, there are sometimes no other ways but to change skin. The Iranian classical music, of course, started the preparation for progress towards a new age long before ‘Ali Naqi Vazirī laid its foundation. However, later the students of Vazirī and Şabā each took this task further and attempted to clear the rust of Qājār period from the body of the classical music, new orchestras appeared, singing found a new

novelty and brevity; in addition, lyrics and hits were based on exciting themes.

Mixing of the music and the poems was paid more attention to and sad and cheap themes were diminishing. A few years later the music society of Iran witnessed a new phenomenon that called for a high quality combination of classical music and that of poetry. To achieve such a goal they had to take advantage of first class artistry; because, the base of a good music is how it is played in our classical music and that the quality of such music is thus, measured by the way it is performed; therefore, it carries a special importance.

This phenomenon was named “Immortal flowers”, it was due to the initiative of the scholar Dāvūd Pīrnā whose line of profession was law but, still music was merged with his soul. The talk is about Dāvūd Pīrnā in whose memory, a



celebration event was held last Sunday night by Toos foundation in London.

Before we begin to talk about the celebration event, we shall briefly familiarise ourselves with his life:

Pīrnā was born in Tehran and his father Ḥasan Pīrnā (*Mushir al-Dawla*) was a states man and a broadminded person and a historian of his time. After finishing his primary school, he entered a French school know as “San Luis” and after a few years for pursuing his higher education, he travelled to Switzerland.

Upon his return to Iran he was employed by the department of justice and founded the “society of lawyers”. He

subsequently, was transferred to the treasury and there, he founded the "Office of Statistics".

Pīrnā, during his stay in Europe studied Western classical music and learnt to play the piano. He never forgot the Iranian music and upon his return to Iran decided to rebuild it; for he knew that music and poetry of Iran must be in harmony with one another in order to flourish; thus, the creation of the program of *Gulhā*, so that to such rich music and poetry it could do some justice.

The initial program was the "Immortal flowers" in it; the entire program was about the poems of one particular poet, following that the "Multi Coloured flowers" were created with various poems blended with harmonious music. The excitement and joy Pīrnā had for music constantly encouraged him to create anew. The "Desert flowers" were a special program devoted to local music, "A single flower" special short and rare piece of poetry and music, and finally, "Green flower" a special program devoted to mysticism.

Consequently, the programs became a credible stage for the masters and the giants of

the poetry and music of Iran.

Poets like; Rahi Mu'aīrī, Pizhmān Bakhtīārī and writers like; 'Alī Dashtī, L. Şūratar, music composers such as Khāliqī, Javād Ma'rūfī, and players and singers like; Marziyya, Banān, Şabā, Maḥjūbī, Shahnāz, 'Ibādī, Razmand and Shahīdī. Among the artists of *Gulhā* program the name of two persons must be referred to as distinguished.

First, Khāliqī, a literal man and a student of Vazīrī, familiar with music and a good music composer; also an encourager of innovation, the great orchestra of *Gulhā* was led by him and left valuable works behind.

The other distinguished person was Rahī Mu'aīrī a great and famous poet and lyric composer. He was one of the few poets who were also familiar with music. He also had some singing voice. In the history of composing hits there are few who can be equal with Mu'aīrī. Mixing of the poems and music in his works were the result of extreme accuracy; hence, beautiful and moving. Rahī was the utterance of lovers and he placed his soul within his poetry. Most of Rahī's poetry was sung by Banān, everything that was sung by Banān carried the seal of

immortality and by the appearance of Banān in the *Gulhā* program, Pīrnā was somehow relieved too, for he always sought the new reliable voices...

From then on, it was Banān, Khāliqī and Rahī...and trays of flowers from the rose garden of the Persian music and poetry! Other singers and composers found their ways into the program later: Tajvīdī, Khurram, Yāḥaqī, Badī'ī, Pāyvar, Tarraqī, Şafā, Mu'īnī Kirmānshāhī, Tūraj, Elāhe, 'Ahdīyya, Sīmā Bīnā, Gulpāigānī, Hāyedeh, and Mahastī and...Thus, their work and credibility was consequently increased.

Now that we have reached this point, it would be good to take a statistical view at the *Gulhā* program. In the area of the Immortal flowers the total programs were 157, the area of the colourful flowers 481 programs were produced and broadcasted. The details of other programs are as follows:

A single flower: 465,
Green flower: 312, and
Desert flowers 62
programs. As a result the entire collections of *Gulhā* which was managed by Pīrnā for over 10 years come to 1427 programs!

Dāvūd Pīrnā left the programs in 1966 due to a heart condition and disagreement with the authorities of the Ministry of Information and died some six years later in 1972. May his flowers be Immortal!

Gulhā-yi Sāyeh

...And the flowers of Pīrnā lived on even after he was gone. They were looked after in a way that they would last forever. Their responsibility was in the hands of Rahī Mu'aīrī and after him, in 1968 it was the turn of an old and experienced musician, Mīr Naqībī. He too, ran thing just like Pīrnā did for a period of five years and due to a heart condition he retired.

The year 1973, was the year of changes and *Gulhā* had found a leader who wanted to make changes in music and poetry. Hūshang Ibtihāj, (*Sāyeh*) in addition to his familiarity with the Iranian classical music, he new the new poetry too and he did not just enjoyed the classical music, he knew it inside out and he associated with all the top masters of music.

“Sāyeh” was fond of the new poetry-he still does- thus; he opened the doorway for the new poets to the program of

Gulhā. For this reason, he chose a new name for the program too: The fresh flowers! (*Gulhā-yi Tāzeh*), so new poets, singers, musicians and speakers gradually entered the program. Sāyeh, after a short while, created a new program: The Pick of the Week! (*Gulchīn-i Hafteh*) which could more or less replace the “Multi coloured flowers”.

In the program of the fresh flowers it seemed, like the “Multi coloured flowers” of Pīrnā men had more shares than women. Among those male singers, Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Shahidi seemingly performed more than the rest, after that the turn was on Iraj, Qavāmī, Khānsārī, Gulpāigānī, and Gulchīn. Among the female singers Elāheh, Hengāmeh, Akhavān, and Sīmā Bīnā had more share than the rest and it was afterwards that Marziyya, Hāyedeh, Hūmeyrā, and Mahastī entered the program. Husain ‘Alī Zādeh, M. Lutfī and Meshkatīān the music composers and players of the new age also entered the “fresh flowers” program. During the six years of Sāyeh’s management until the Islamic revolution of Iran 201 “Fresh flowers” programs and several “Picks of the week” programs were produced and broadcasted.

Empty places

And now, the celebration event of the *Gulhā* program, that was put together in the commemoration of Dāvūd Pīrnā and was supported by the Toos foundation in London.

A few “as they say now a day” “the men of music” were also present, and in between visuals and images they played some pieces of music. Naturally, the aim of the foundation had been so that some of the played pieces matched those of the *Gulhā* program. However, in practice and unintentionally some other pieces were played too, for most of the artists who played in the original programs are now passed away and those still alive for various reasons were unable to attend the event.

The memory of all those absent, whether still alive or deceased were refreshed either by video or slide images. Practically, a valuable image collection was displayed for the audience and with the aid of the explanations uttered along with the display of images they became more familiar with artists of the past. In those images as well as Pīrnā himself we were getting acquainted with his father Ḥasan Pīrnā (*Mushir al-Dawla*) and their role in reviving

the culture of Iran, following that we talked about those artists who had considerable shares in the progress of the program.

From those such as Khāliqī to Rahī, Yāḥaqī and Shāhpūrī. In the midst of the program few minutes were given to Dārūsh Pīrnā, the eldest son of Dāvūd Pīrnā so that he could tell the audience about his father's school of thoughts, mystical beliefs, and his passion for the music.

Dārūsh, mentioned that the true motive behind his father's actions was the wisdom of mysticism and that he believed classical music bore such wisdom within.

The wining Ace!

Anyway, we were talking about the music of the celebration event. The actual surprise was the attendance of "Nāhid Dā'ī Javān". The same young girl from Isfahan, who in those days with just one lyric had plundered the heart of the nation, Pīrnā, placed this lyric which was named "the sunset on the mountains" (*Ghorūb-i Kuhistān*) in one of the programs of *Gulhā*, I believe it was the "The desert flowers". Nāhid proved that after all these years her voice is still young. By singing two

lyrics, she took us back in time. To those flourishing years, in all areas of art, those lost days!

Dr Soussan Matlūbī, an artist and an M.D. who is also known as Surūsh Izadī. With her beautiful voice, freshened the atmosphere. Although, what she sang "*Murgh-i Sahar*" and "*Şūratgar-i Naqqāsh-i Chīn*" was not originally played in the *Gulhā* program; however, "*Murgh-i Sahar*" in our time fits to all periods in time. In any case, with her pretty voice, it found a new attraction.

The wining Ace that the coordinators had drawn was Gulpāigānī. However, he upset everyone. Not because he sang a lot, for he did not sing enough! It was for the first time that we witnessed a classical singer displays such short performance, leaving his audience in despair.

Too much talk in classical music is wrong, but saying too little should also have its limitations. Gulpā, sang the first couplet of the famous Tarraqī's lyric, "*Maste mastam Sāqiā dastam begīr/ Tā nayuftādam ze Pā dastam Begīr*"...and unfinished! The continuous clapping of the audience forced him to be generous and sing another song which had a patriotic scent and made everyone eager to hear the

rest, but he never sang and left the stage.

Perhaps under the idea that anyone who likes to hear his voice should buy a ticket! And comes to his concert in three days time in London, what he sang in that event was obviously an advertisement to sell tickets!

The Speakers

In the *Gulhā* program, each speaker found their own special place alongside the music and poetry. Pīrnā used experienced speakers with good voice. He wanted poems at the side of a perfect music to be presented properly. Rushanak, was the nick name of "Şadīgheh Rasūlī" the first speaker on the program whose velvety voice was harmonious with the mystical poems played on the program. After her, other harmonious voices entered the circle. Some of them were present at the celebration event.

"Ādhar Pazhūhish" did some declamations of classical poetry and proved that she still is an able speaker who can feel the spirit of what she reads, reflecting such feelings and comprehension in her voice.

“Fīruzeh Amir Mu’iz” did also the same performance and proved that she benefits from the same abilities. Later, it was the turn of “Fakhri Nikzād” who of course, was the speaker of “the fresh flowers” under the management of Sāyeh. Nikzād has a bass and mature voice and in the event it seemed that it has become more mature with deeper bass.

What could be said about vocalists is that some make so much effort in “voice-training”. This kind of training; although, improves the voice in

some areas but it can prove harmful too. Every voice must be preserved and presented naturally.

“Lu’bat Vālā”, a poetess and lyric composer who lives abroad and although her main occupation is not singing, but she possesses such voice that is suitable for declamation. She has a mature voice and by singing one of Rahī’s lyrics she created a special feeling for the audience.

The celebration of *Gulhā* with all its good points, of course, had its faults too, and by taking the many obstacles of the way into account it was to be expected. However, the motive of such celebrations is so exciting that it covers all its downfalls. Jamileh Kharrazi the founder of Toos foundation performs miracles; she can be a role model to all those who have financial strength. There are fields in the arts and cultures of Iran that can benefit from financial backings.