

Mohammad Heydari: Those who made “*Gulhā*” immortal

Mohammad Heydari, the outstanding Iranian Music composer is one of those faces who have made artistic works and he too like other artists who were present at the celebration event in commemoration of Dāvūd Pīrnīā by Toos foundation in London is invited. We take advantage of this opportunity to conduct an interview with him and to ask him about the *Gulhā* programme in addition to those who made it happen.

Q. The start of the *Gulhā* programme with Mr. Dāvūd Pīrnīā.

A. Mr. Pīrnīā was the founder of the *Gulhā* programme, which initially began with the “immortal flowers” and later, progressively, other programmes and titles were added such as “multi coloured flowers”, “the desert flowers”, “a single flower” and possibly other titles were added. However, they were all known as *Gulhā* programme. Mr. Davūd Pīrnīā who was an honourable and a distinguished man



provided great services in every post he worked. This time his efforts were about the music and poetry of Iran. When the *Gulhā* programme began, I was the student of master Şabā and still practiced music; naturally, due to my passion for music I used to listen to the programme every Wednesday at 10.00 am.

As far as I can remember the orchestra included Mr. Şabā, Tajvīdī, Mansūrī, Maḥjūbī, Tehrani, Vaziritabār, Zarrinpanjeh and other artists whom I cannot remember; of course, later, others like Yaḥaqī, Badi’ī, Khurram, Kasā’ī, Shahnāz, Sharīf, Rezā Varzandeh plus the

great orchestra of the radio Iran which had approximately 25-30 players joined the programme and the female singers were: Elāheh, Mahastī, Ḥumeyrā, Nāhid, Purān and Hāyedeh. The other group was male singers: Banān, Qavāmī, Gulpā, Khānsārī, Shahīdī, and Gulchīn most of the masters composed music too, and it was then that perseverance of the Iranian music with the effort of Mr. Pīrnīā began and that the entire collection of *Gulhā* programme is one of our national prides, and is registered in the history of Iranian music forever. However, regrettably, I never met this honourable

man because at the time I was only a child.

Q. What impact did the *Gulhā* programme have on the Iranian music?

A. As I mentioned before at the age of fifteen I was a music student of Mr. Şabā, and every now and again I could hear him complain about the situation in the radio and the mess that was facing our music. This, of course, was before the *Gulhā* programme and the involvement of Mr. Pīrnā. He always complained about the situation; because, there were always Arabic, Turkish and Indian mixture and melody broadcast and there were two singers “Jebelī” and “Şafi’ī” who always sang in Arabic melody.

I even remember that Mr. Şabā once mentioned that radio Iran had received a letter from Cairo Radio saying: If you like to play Arabic music please say so, and we will send you the correct notes, so you broadcast them correctly! The reason this was mentioned is to express what state the Iranian music was in during the pre-Pīrnā period.

However, due to tireless efforts of Mr. Pīrnā and the hardship of various masters of music the *Gulhā* programme began to take its correct path and moved on the right

direction. Thereafter, we saw the great works of its artists and masters being produced.

Q. Please tell us who you worked with, what programmes you were in, and all in all the number of your works you have done?

A. At the age of 17, I started to play in the orchestra no. 1 of the fine arts of the country under the leadership of Mr. Şabā which I was invited by master Şabā himself, until the time of his death I was at his service, but later, the leadership of the orchestra was given to Mr. Dihlavī who was an educated musician.

After working with Mr. Dihlavī for a while and due to some family problems I was unable to continue my work and consequently, left until the time that the first Iranian television channel “Channel 3” with the support of the private firm of Mr. Sābet Pasal was opened and MR. M. Pahlbod, Her Majesties Shams’s husband was the head of the Ministry of fine arts; he too, due to his passion for music took control of the same television channel; subsequently, a several small orchestras were formed. Following that I began performing in orchestra no. 1 under the leadership of Mr. N. Gulpāigānī, due to request

of Mr. Dihlavī. After a short while and as a result of an unsuccessful operation Mr. N. Gulpāigānī died and I became the leader of the same orchestra.

Now let me tell you about the people I worked and associated with.

In those days the singers of the Ministry of fine arts, which was later changed to the Ministry of arts and cultures, were as follows: female singers: Khātereh Parvaneh, Afkham, Afsaneh, Parivash, and the male singers: Nakhust, Turaj, Karimi, Gulchīn, and I almost worked with all of them. Of course, I must say that in those days I had the pleasure of working with Mrs. “Lu’bat Vālā” and Mr. “Ebrahim Şafā’ī” who were talented song writers. The poems on most of my music were composed by “Lu’bat Vālā” and sung by Khātereh Parvaneh.

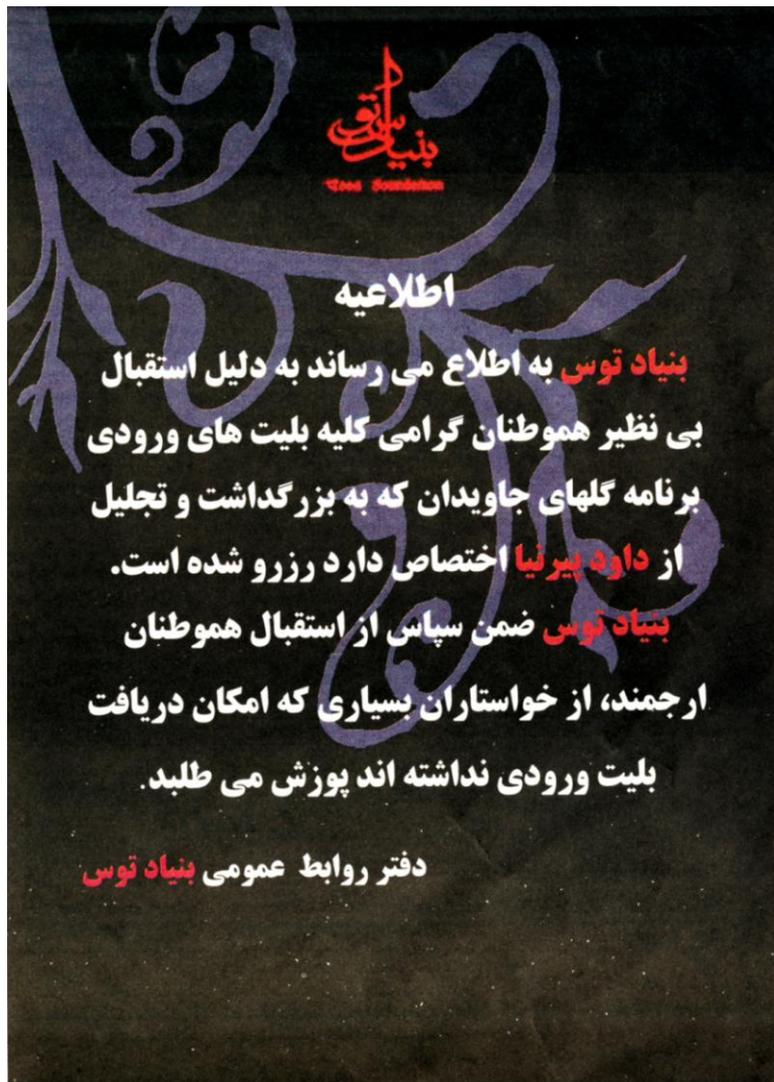
One of my pieces was played on the television one day which was liked by Mrs. Elāheh after which I was approached by her asking permission to sing it and I was introduced to Tūraj Negahbān by Elāheh. The result of this acquaintance was the song (*Nāmihrabūnī*) which became very popular, following that I was approached by the rest of

the singers asking me to composed music for them. I composed music for: Hāyedeḥ, Mahastī, Ḥumeyrā, Elāheḥ, Gulpā, and after my residence in America for Sattār, Mu'īn, and Omīd.

Q. Please mention the name of some of the music you composed.

A. Elāhe: *Nāmihrabūnī, Āshufeh, Pūnehā.*
 Mahastī: *Āshufteh, Del az tu delgīreh, Afsordeh del, Cherāgh, Bīyā benevīsam, Havā-yi Yār, Meykhūneh bī sharābeh.* Hāyedeḥ: *Heyf Heyf, Del sarde sarde, Vaqtī ke az tu dūram, Manam āneḥ baraye to mīmīreh, Neshāneh, Delam mikhad ke rūzi šad hezār bār, Sughātī, Zahr-i Judā'ī, Be juz khudā kasī nīst, Bahār bahār, Qalbam Gereft, Un ke ye rūzī and In Khudā bood.* Gulpā: *Bīqarār, Havas-i meykadeh, Qadr, Muḥabat, Khūneh, Eshq, Ashk, 'Ajab umram tamum shod.* Plus in the fresh flowers programme which was my first programme of *Gulhā* together with Badi'ī and Ābtīn Ejlālī programme number 99 with the voice of Gulchīn and *bayāt-i Turk* with Malik's violin, voice of Iraj and Emād Rām *Māhūr* with the voice of Iraj and music "*Dar in sarā-yi bikasī*" with poem by Mr. Ibtihāj who was the head of the programme at the time.

Gulhā-yi Ghurbat no. 4:
 There were also Gulpā



Shajarian, Gulpā, Mahastī and Gulchīn and in total I played *Santūr* in six programmes.

Furthermore, due to my personal passion to the *Gulhā* programme I created a programme in America called "The Exile Flowers" (*Gulhā-yi Ghurbat*) which was very successful:

Gulhā-yi Ghurbat no. 1: Hāyedeḥ

Gulhā-yi Ghurbat no. 2: Mu'īn

Gulhā-yi Ghurbat no. 3: Mu'īn

Gulhā-yi Ghurbat no. 5: Sattār

Q- What is the situation about position of music in Iran and outside Iran?

A-As for the music inside Iran, it is something that is not my concern. They have their own ways. However, as for the place of music overseas, in particular in L.A, I must say it is somewhat regrettable that it has reached the present state. It can no longer be called music they mix Indian, Turkish, Arabic, and so

on to produce some dance rhythm which is only good for weddings and parties. It gets worst day by day; of course it suits the children born in America and that kind of music fits that generation. However, the singers of my time who are now in L.A also, are exceptions. Fortunately, those in London are some how different, it seems that they have preserved their originality better than other overseas countries.

Q- What is your opinion about the Toos Foundation and their cultural activities?

A-I must say this effort made by the Toos Foundation is a valuable cultural contribution. To transfer a culture from one generation to another and keeping it intact in the process is a hard task and it can only be the work of foundations such as the Toos foundation. I must also say a nice well done to all responsible for such events.