

A discussion with Dr. Suroush Izadi the *Gulhā* Singer

Medicine and Singing side by side!



Q. We have heard that you would be attending an event in London very soon, please explain about this event and what will your role be in it?

You are an experienced singer, and you have had numerous concerts in various countries, may I please ask you to speak to our readers about your artistic history?

A. At the age, of 8 I was the first kid singer in the children's programme of *Dāvūd Pīrnā* in the mornings, I went to school and the evenings to the National School of Art and Music. There I learnt the classical music from masters like *Davāmī*, and *Karīmī*. Master *Jāhīd* taught me his songs. Master *Zarrin*

Panjuh taught me *Setār*. At the age of 15, I sang with the *Tār* of master *Shahnāzī* and *Santūr* of master *Pāyvar*. For a brief period, I performed in the fine art programmes on television. Later, I entered for the pre-University examinations and after achieving a high grade enrolled the school of medicine at Tehran University.

Throughout my study, I also provided tutorial services for the students in singing. I was also active in all University concerts and events. While undertaking my special learning for the children and adults, I became involved with the programme of the "pick of the weeks" under the

management of *Ibtihāj* and with groups like *Pāyvar* and *Muftāh*, the orchestra of the Iranian National radio and television and the *Samā'ī* and *Sheydā* groups.

After the revolution, I continued my musical activities in Europe and America, gathering several concerts and CDs with the works of 'Ālami, Akhbārī and 'Attā'ī.

Q. You have associated with many experienced musicians and music players; please tell us

with which one of them you were more involved?

A. I started working with Mr. Pāyvar at the age of 18, in that group there were Mr. Zārīf and Badī'ī. Years later, in the programme of "the picks of the week" we started working together once again. After the revolution I had other concerts in Vienna, and Germany with Mr. Zārīf. In the forty odd years that I know Mr. Zārīf we have worked together on many occasions and various fields. I have always praised him. I dare say he can be referred to as one of the most distinguished artists and a decent human being, a patient teacher to his students. This collection can rarely be found in many artists.

Q. How do you manage medical practice and singing at the same time? What is the connection between them?

A. I learnt them both during my youth. I learnt them side by side. Early mornings I studied and at nights at the art school I was busy learning art. I pursued them in a serious manner and wasted very little time. Music prepared my mind for other duties. During the practice of medicine it was a good meditation to ready me for hard works. During the difficulties of the first years of

immigration, music was my aid through the caring of my children Sepideh and Sāvīz. Singing has always been my love and passion, but I have always moved according to my beliefs. The reason music was not chosen as my sole occupation was due to discrepancies that existed in the world of art that were not agreeable with my personal beliefs. This situation; thus, set me back and I did not benefit from the fame and

curiosity, although, both hold moral values for me.

Q. Do you think the supports of institutions such as Toos; can prove useful for Iranian arts and its progress?

A. The classical music must have the support of the government. In Europe the Opera halls and their singers and players are all under the protection of the government, otherwise, they would never survive.

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popularities of most artists of the time. I chose medicine through

The Iranian classical music is no exception either. However, the

government authorities pay little attention to the issue and at a time like this the activities of institutions such as Toos, can be greatly felt. Because, in such difficult times, the loving efforts and continues hard work of its members to arrange such programmes as the “Concert of *Gulhā* in commemoration of Dāvūd Pīrnā” for the young generations and to revive

the culture and literature of Iran is admirable.

Q. It seems that the Iranian music is going through a rough time at present and unlike the past when it was under the protection of government departments and organisations, it is no longer the case. Has this situation made any impact on the innovation and progress of the Iranian music?

A. This is the duty of every single Iranian to introduce their rich and profound music which is based on the thousands of years of culture and civilization.

Unfortunately, the picture that the world media have painted of Iran has only one dimension, it must be changed and presented the way it deserves and should be.