

North Khorasan Province a center of grape production in Iran



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The suitable climatic and geographical conditions have made North Khorasan Province one of the important centers of grape production in Iran.

Having many grape vineyards, both rainfed and irrigated, North Khorasan Province supplies a large part of northeastern Iran. This province has more than 344,000 hectares of agricultural land, of which about 38,000 hectares are fruit orchards, surfiran.com wrote.

Also, about half the gardens in the province, i.e., over 18,000 hectares are vineyards, which have a great contribution to the agricultural economy of this province, with an average annual production of 160,000 tons.

The grapes produced in the province include Kolhadari, Kheshmeshi, Askari, La'al, Yakuti, black grapes, and Mikami.

In the last few years, new cultivars have entered the province, 83 of which have reached fruition. The existence of suitable climatic and geographical conditions has made North Khorasan Province one of the important centers of grape production in the country. Of the total production of grapes in the province, about 13,000 tons are fresh, 25,000 tons are processed, and about 90,000 tons are surplus.

North Khorasan Province has the sixth place in the country in terms of grape production. Grape cultivation has been common in this region for a long time, which is well adapted to the region's climate. The vine growers of the province produce a variety of products from grape, which are very marketable; raisin, vinegar, and juice are among them.

Grapes produced in the province are of very good quality, and the popularity of this product in world markets is also high. Thus ground should be provided for the sale of these products.

Every year, with the beginning of the autumn season, the grape harvest begins in the orchards of North Khorasan Province. Kolhadari and raisin grapes are the main types of production in the province.



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Persian traditional music

Throughout Persian history, the therapeutic power of Persian traditional music has been often noted. In the Sassanid Period, for instance, during a musical gathering, the audience was so affected by a composition played by the renown harp master Nakisa that they lost consciousness and tore their clothes. In old times, they considered music a spiritual art and believed that it could produce all sorts of changes in the soul.

The story of Barbad informing the king about the death of his horse through a song is very popular. From these and other similar tales, it is obvious that music and musicians — who were at the same time singers and poets — had a strong influence on the leaders of nations, and even affairs of the state. But their power was not only political. You may hear about

the healing powers of correct music, for example the case of Homer's Odyssey when a magic chant stopped the flowing of blood from Ulysses' wound.

According to Avicenna in the eleventh-century, *ney*, an end-blown flute, music helped in healing typhoid. He also lists the curative powers of some of the modes according to historians.

But therapy through music was not solely an ancient phenomenon; not many years ago Abulhossein Shahnazi cured a case of typhoid by playing *setar*, a half hour at the bedside of the patient.

The proper performance of Persian music

Although the *gusheh* or melodic sequences are passed down from master to disciple, after many years of training a student becomes

familiar enough with the material to be able to improvise by interpreting the melodic sequences which he or she knows. It is similar to the way that American jazz was originally passed from musician to musician, each artist learning the solos and patterns of the master and then finally adding his or her own interpretation during improvisation.

Persian music and other eastern musical systems have changed slowly over the centuries after having been perfected by various noteworthy masters. Regional and personal styles, however, definitely have evolved.

In Persian music and other Eastern performing arts, mood is always more important than technique, even though amazing and intricate technical skills are associated with these performing arts. Such skills are always

subservient to the emotion of the performer whose role is that of a channel which conveys expressions from a higher realm to the audience. With regard to the freedom which is characteristic of Persian rhythm, such as the *avaz* (free-rhythm) type *gushe* (melodic segment) for example, these melodic sequences allow the performers to reflect their inner feelings in the music through the use of free rhythms.

It is a tool that in the hands of a master, enables him to reflect his and the audience's feelings in the music or to create changes in them.

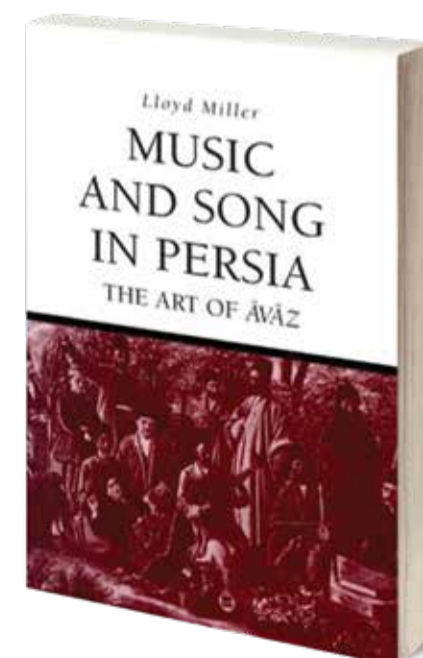
The performer can manipulate the rhythms of a certain *gusheh* to make them sad or nostalgic. Undetectable changes alter the moods and turn all that sorrow into a meditative mood or even happiness.

Improvisation is one of the

most important characteristics of Iranian music. This is a tool to be used by those who have completely grasped the tradition since: "Improvisation was a technique that enabled the master musician to make spontaneous changes in the melodies according to his feelings."

According to the tradition, the disciple needed to study the complete *radif* which usually took a dozen years. When a person could correctly render all the melodic sequences to the satisfaction of the master, he/she can interpret the *dastgah* system and eventually, and after a lifetime of perfecting his skills, add some input of his/her own.

This process of slowly adding and reinterpreting the ancient melodic sequences has, over the millennia, developed into the present-day *radif* system.



The above is a lightly edited version of a part of a chapter entitled, 'Music, Islam, Mysticism and Proper Performance', from a book entitled, 'Music and Song in Persia, The Art of Avaz,' written by Lloyd Clifton Mille, published by Curzon Press.