

Zohreh Jooya

Zohreh Jooya was raised in the city of Mashad in eastern Iran. With her father being from Afghanistan and her mother from Iran she was brought up in the traditions of both cultures. After High School she moved to Europe to study music. Beginning in Amsterdam she then came to Vienna where she received a classical music education at the Academy of Music and made her master's degree at the "Conservatoire of the City of Vienna." Jooya is influenced by the Oriental as well as the European world. She pursues her singing career in both cultures. Her European classical engagements cover a broad spectrum from Italian baroque music to songs by George Gershwin. In world music she performs at international festivals presenting Persian and Afghan music.

Jooya has created a new, personal way to interpret her songs, as presented on her albums "*Persian Nights*" and "*A Journey to Persia*" (EUCD1841, ARC Music). On both she sings in the languages of the different parts of Iran.

Zohreh Jooya sings mystical songs of the Persian poet Nezami in "*Shirin and Farhad*", "*The Indian Princess*" and "*Shahresad*" accompanying the famous storyteller Professor Parviz Mamnun. ARC Music has published her album "*Music of the Persian Mystics*" (EUCD1792) composed by Majid Derakhshani. It presents poems of *Mowlana Rumi*, *Saadi*, *Hafiz* and *Shafii Katkani*. For more information visit www.zohreh-jooya.org.

Ostad Majid Derakhshani - tar, bamtar (lutes), dohol (drum); arrangements

Majid Derakhshani was born into an artist family in the province of Semnan in Iran. He studied string instruments and composition at the University of Fine Arts in Teheran. His teacher on *setar* and *tar* was the legendary Mohamad Reza Lotfi. After moving to Germany Derakhshani founded the music school *Nava* in Cologne. Majid has given many highly acclaimed performances at international festivals and broadcasting stations all over the world. Today Majid Derakhshani is considered one of the best *tar* players of Iran and granted the respectful title "*Ostad*", meaning a master who can give the best performance on a classical instrument. He has recorded the album "*Dar Khial*" with the most famous Iranian singer Mohamadreza Shajarian.

It is Majid's desire to introduce Iranian classical music to Western culture. He regards himself as a messenger for this wonderful and sensitive music. He believes that music is alive, like a living creature. It must move forward; a standstill is detrimental, hence he has decided to travel new roads. A result of this development is his latest album composition based on mystical poetry by *Mowlana Rumi*, *Shamsodin Mohamad Hafiz* und *Saadi*, "*Music of the Persian Mystics*", recorded with Zohreh Jooya, published by ARC Music (EUCD1792).

Nariman Hodjaty - tar, setar (lutes)

Nariman Hodjaty was born in Masandaran in north-eastern Iran. He studied architecture and graphics at the Academy of Arts in Teheran, and music at the College for Traditional Persian Music. Nariman had to leave Iran and has been living in Austria since 1986, where he is a musician, music teacher and author of books. As a composer and arranger he has contributed to several CD productions such as "*Persian Nights*", "*Persian Children's Songs*", as well as film and theatre music for "*Zarwan*", "*Haft Peykar*", "*Erfan – Songs of the Planets*", "*Songs of Spring*" and "*Time Swing*". As a *tar* virtuoso he played numerous concerts in Iran and Europe.

Traditional Persian Music

There are fundamental differences between traditional Persian music and European music. Persian music is not based on a polyphonic structure, where several instruments play different notes at the same time within a chord or where a melody is accompanied by chords. In Persian music all instruments play the same note in the same or in different octaves. But still this music has a richness and great variety which is achieved through a call-and-response of the instruments. They fill the gaps in the lead melody and play around the melody in a special way of improvising. It is a kind of vocal or instrumental dialogue between the musicians of an ensemble. The musicians have to know each other very well and have to have played together for years in order to achieve this. Persian music is not written down; it is passed on from the "Ostad", the master, to the student. It is only of late that a written notation as in Western music is increasingly coming into use.

Another difference lies in how the notes follow each other. Persian music is based on the *radif*, a collection of ancient melodies, which have been passed on from masters to disciples. Often the melodies are known by the names of their composers. The Western system has definite schematised laws about the notes within scales. Persian music is played in *maghams* based on *radifs*. There are seven main groups (*dastgahs*) which divide into subgroups (*gushe* - niches), like the branches of a tree.

To the Western listener the most unusual aspects of Persian music are the different intervals. Western music only uses whole and half notes. In Persian music, as in most oriental music, quarter tones are frequently used.

Improvisation is an important part of Persian music. Unlike jazz improvisations, which expand and ornament a melody, Persian improvisation develops one note by playing variations around it, so that the note blooms like a flower.

Traditional Persian music can be divided into "traditional folk music" and "classical art music". The pieces on this album are, with two exceptions, folk music. People are influenced by nature and their environment and surroundings, therefore folk music is a simple, uncomplicated and "honest" music. Lyrics tell about the simple things in life. They portray important events such as weddings and births in the life of a village and its people. Above all they tell about love between two people. They are flowery, colourful and very romantic. Folk music is also an important expression of momentous events in the history of a people or a certain moral precept or human virtue. Rhythm, sound and the colour of the melodies express the main character of a people. Kurdish music, for example, is a simple, powerful, almost militant music with strongly emphasized rhythms of the *daf* and *dohol* (drums). They use mostly 2/4 or 6/8 rhythms, while music from Khorason uses 4/4, 5/8, 6/8 and 7/8 beats. The *tar* is the predominant melody instrument, as it offers a lot of technical possibilities. The *tombak*, which is played with the fingers and provides a less accentuated, finer, more playful rhythm, is the main rhythm instrument.

This album aims to present the music of various different regions of Persia. We chose not to play them in the forms which are usual in the villages. The contributions of the renowned composers and arrangers *Majid Derakhshani* and *Nariman Hojaty* give the songs a new lustre. The internationally renowned singer *Zohreh Jooya* provides a more cultivated and urban interpretation of the songs. She sings them in the respective languages of the regions, i.e. Masanderani, Gilaki, Kurdish, Asari and Farsi (Persian).

The songs *Dareneh Jahn* (j = dj) and *Aziz Jun* are from the province of Masanderan in north-eastern Persia, which is a very verdant region with mountains and lush vegetation beside the Caspian Sea. The area has a subtropical climate where everything grows. *Dareneh Jahn* mourns her lost lover: "Your departure caused me sorrow". That song is frequently played together with *Aziz Jun* which coquettishly advises how it can all be sorted out again: "My dear, if you want me to come back, you will have to pray".

The second province by the Caspian Sea in north-western Persia is Gilan. The song *Simay Jahn* ('My Beloved Sima') is from that area. "My beloved Sima, I feel like you, lean your head

against my shoulder. To get to you in Beispili, I walk through Lahijan, Langerud and Delaman. When I see you, my eyes will light up and my heart will beat strongly”.

The songs *Chador Zari* ('The Golden Veil'), *Rashid Khan* and *Asbe Samand* (The Golden-blond Horse) are from Khorason in northeast Persia, bordering on Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. The culture of Khorason contains influences of various different peoples. The borders of the country changed many times throughout the centuries. Occasionally this region belonged to Afghanistan. Then the province of Herat in eastern Afghanistan belonged to Khorason as part of the Persian Empire. The old Khorason reached far into Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This region has the richest folk music in Iran. The music shows this variety.

Chador Zari is a song to the girl with the golden veil. “Leila, I sacrifice myself for you. I love the birth mark on your lips. I love the way you walk. I will go to Kerman for you and bring you henna”.

Rashid Khan: A girl sings about her love for a “khan”, a nobleman and land owner. “Today is the second day and tomorrow will be the third, that Rashid has been away. When you went away, you did not think that I would be all alone in this strange city.”

Asbe Samand is a wedding song. “Saddle your horse, groom, the bride is arriving. She is so beautiful, everybody will be jealous. You can hear the wedding music with the shawms and drums.”

Leily ('The Girl Leily') and *Asmar*, *Asmar* are from the province of Kurdistan in western Iran.

Leily: “Your eyes are like china. If we should get together, we would suit each other nicely. You are the orange tree and I am the lime tree”. *Asmar*, *Asmar*: “Asmar, my beloved, you are so young and so far away. No-one either knows or cares about the pain of separation in my heart, for I am from Kermanshah and you are from Ghasrehshirin.”

Dokhtare Buyerahmadi ('The Girl from Buyer Ahmad'): Buyer Ahmad is a town in southern Iran in the province Fars, near the capital Shiraz. “Oh girl from Buyer Ahmad, I do not yet know your name. But come to me, your home shall be here. No flower can match the beauty of your face.”

In north-western Persia, bordering on Turkey and Iraq, are the provinces East and West Azerbaijan with their main city Tabriz, the second largest city of Persia. Up to the Russian War near the end of the 19th century, “North Azerbaijan” with its capital Baku was also part of Persia. Today 25% of the Iranian population are Azerbaijani (Azeri) who speak “Azeri” (a Turkic language). The songs *Ayrilyk* ('Separation') and *Gan Jan* ('You Beautiful Blossom') are old Azerbaijani songs. *Ayrilyk*: “Her lover must leave and go far away to a distant land. She can hardly sleep, the nights become too long and she is afraid in all this darkness.”

Even though the song *Gan Jan* originates from Baku, we present it as an historical example of how the provinces of East and West Azerbaijan (in Iran) and “North Azerbaijan”, (today's independent state of Azerbaijan) musically belong together.

Asemun Beh in Gapi and *Massom*, *Massom* ('I am Intoxicated') are from Shiraz in southern Persia. *Asemun Beh in Gapi*: “There she is, like a new blossom on a tree. I cannot reach her and she will not fall down to me. She has intoxicated me and injured my hand with her thorns. Come, let us go to the mosque, to exchange vows of love.”

Massom, *Massom*: “It is written in the heavens, that he, who has a beautiful lover, owns paradise.”

The instrumental piece *Sarah* was included to give an example of Persian Art Music. It is a romantic piece in the Persian *maghams Homajun* and *Esfahan*, composed by Nariman Hodjaty after the laws of Persian classical music.

Zohreh Jooya - *vocals*
Majid Derakhshani - *vocals, tar, bamtar, dohol*
Nariman Hodjaty - *vocals, tar, setar*
Asim Al Chalabi - *oud*
Jahangir Mahsoodlu - *ney*
Amirabbas Zareh - *daire, daf*
Feridoun Chegini - *daire*
Kamran Kiaji - *tombak*

Licensed in 2004 from **Ahmadreza Jouya**, Iran

Recording and mastering at **Studio Feridoun Chegini**, Cologne, Germany

Premaster: **Diz Heller**
Photos in the booklet provided by **Ernst Schönleitner**
Cover photo: **Irene Schanda**
Cover design: **Alex Stokes**
Liner notes: **Ernst Schönleitner / Zohreh Jooya, Diz Heller**
Typesetting / layout: **Barbara Papadopoulos**