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The Standardization Procedure for Iranian Music

(Focusing on the Activities of Alfred Jean Baptiste Lemaire, Aref Qazvini and Ali-Naqi Vaziri)

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Abstract

The study of Iranian music changes during Qajar and early Pahlavi era, reveals a procedure which indicates the beginning of a kind of standardization. The term “standardization” (matching) seems to be able to state a part of Iranian music change within history. The study of three existing characters of this period of Iran's history (Alfred Jean Baptiste Lemaire, Aref Qazvini and Ali-Naqi Vaziri) raises this question that how standardization (matching) can be followed up in the activities of the aforementioned elites. Having responded to this question, the quality and quantity of Iranian music changes in the intended historical era can be somehow figured out. This study has been conducted through library study using descriptive-analytical method. The findings of this study represent the manner of standardization (matching) in the activities of these three artists. Using notation system and changing the instrument structure, playing Iranian songs with Western instruments, scientific teaching at school and training the apprentices, holding concert and changing the themes and content of some executions and writing music book are among the cases, supposed to be investigated in this paper.

Keywords: Music, Standardization, Alfred Jean Baptiste Lemaire, Aref Qazvini, Ali-Naqi Vaziri, Qajar, First Pahlavi.

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Introduction

Western art has continuously influenced Iranian art since the past centuries. As to music, this influence can be traced particularly back to Qajar era. In addition to the influence of music of other world areas on Iranian music (external factors), it is necessary to say that the role of sociopolitical changes and the elites (internal factors) should be also taken into account in this process. For example, the changes of Constitutionalism and Parliamentarianism era have influenced the course of artistic activity in Iran throughout Qajar era, which includes a number of the aforementioned internal factors.

Some books and papers have been written about this subject during the past years. For example, the paper "Western music influence in Iran during Qajar era" by Sasan Fatemi is noticeable for studying the process of western music inclusion in the Iranian music as the background of the work. First, Fatemi has used comparative framework and he has studied how Iranian music has been influenced compared to the influence of western music on the other Middle East nations (geographical), and second, he has compared it to art of painting (thematically); but in this comparative study, the studied music has not been compared to its former form i.e. in Afshar, Zand and early Qajar era (chronologically). In order to achieve a clear image of changes in Iranian music through comparative method, the music characteristics of late Qajar shall be compared to its past. While the author of mentioned paper has ignored playing Iranian melodies with western instrument (such as piano and violin) and its direct and indirect influences, because the Iranian melody has remained and only instruments have been westernized; so he has a particular perception of a historical event. He says: "the modernists of music in this era are basically interested in modernism not really in western music. In fact, none of musicians, facing western instruments and accepting different elements of western musical culture as modernity, do not get distance from tradition and they still remain dependent on Iranian music" (Fatemi, 2014: 11). This is while the domain of west influence on Iranian music gets wider, especially from the middle of Qajar era and can be studied directly or indirectly. The other work is the book of Gholamreza Darvishi, titled as "Looking at West". Proposing some information about the process of western music influence on Iranian music, the problem is the manner of this influence or according to the book author, the manner of acculturation. He adds that the influence of western music has been strong (Darvishi, 1994: 24). Although Darvishi has discussed the issue under the general concept of acculturation, the features of these influences can be followed more particularly and accurately. This can be done by studying the musicians of this era.

In the book "The third wave", Elvin Toffler has considered standardization (matching) as one of six aspects of human modern life with an anti-difference quality. Defining this procedure, he says: "There is only one better way to do a work or one better tool to execute it among various ways" (Toffler, 2015: 64). Taylor, as an economist, has sought to find the best way of doing a work by presenting a method which is called "scientific management" (Giddens, 2015: 551). "The best way" which is a criterion for standardization, is the one which requires thinking in the field of culture and art.

Now, if we leave the economic framework of Taylor and use the given model in the field of music (as a field which is not necessarily materialistic), we should say that in fact, thinking and manner of standardization in music field proposes a model to be a criterion for others so that musicians' efforts directed toward likening the local music (Iranian) more to the determined standard (criterion music). This paper aims to discuss that how the activities of influential characters such as Lemaire, Aref and Vaziri, consciously or unconsciously, have led the Iranian music toward standardization. The paper will address the question "by what means is standardization revealed in the activities of aforementioned people?" and basically "why authors think "standardization" is the appropriate term to name the concerned changes of Iranian music?" Analyzing the books, it has been tried to assess formal and informal changes of music in this era.

Alfred Jean Baptiste Lemaire

Many years ago, Abbas Mirza started practical training in military assisting by Russian officers (Bulookbashi, 2002: 36) but after his death, such an idea was left unfinished. Before 1868, some European musicians such as Basque, Rouillon and Marco were also involved in training military music in military music bands of Iran court (ibid: 41). Alfred Jean Baptiste Lemaire came to Iran in 1868 and began his job in music department of Dar ul-funun (Koohestaninejad, 2005: 25) and he was the most influential head of music department. In a particular time of his presence, most of apprentices of Dar ul-funun music department used to play western instrument such as Salar Moazzez, Hossein Khan Hangafarin, Soleiman Khan, Naser Homayoun and others (Khaleghi, 2011: 151). Of course, all these people were trained by Lemaire in music department. Lemaire has pointed out that the students of conservatory (the music department of Dar ul-funun) have been succeeded to write the accurate notes of Iranian ballads (Sahbaei, 2003: 11). In addition to making interest in this people and teaching the manner of playing western instrument, Lemaire has a set of recorded notes with the name of "Tetraphone for Iranian Tunes" (Mallah, 1975: 113) which was unique for Iranian music in that time. He also wrote some melodies in scales (Dastgāh) of Māhur, Humāyun and Chāhārgāh for piano (He claims to be the first person used accompaniment with them) yet he has not been able to recognize correct musical intervals, particularly in Humāyun (Mallah, 1975: 125; Sahbaei, 2003: 10). He has made such mistake whether due to conscious simplifying or lack of aesthetic familiarity with Iranian melody.

Through the military music, Lemaire indirectly founded polyphonic music in Iran (Sahbaei, 2003: 10). Most of people of the first generation of musicians, modernly trained in Qajar era and influenced by training western music, were his students. Ali-Naqi Vaziri, who implemented western notation system widely on Iranian music, had learnt western notation from Hangafarin [Lemaire's apprentice] (Farhat, 2013) and referred to Soleiman Khan for learning the science of harmony (Khaleghi, 2011: 352). Soleiman Khan was one of the best apprentices of Lemaire and music officials regarded him better than all Lemaire's apprentices (ibid: 151). The music training program under the supervision of Lemaire included playing piano, violin and orchestration. Lemaire's curriculum in school included training music notes, playing wind, percussion and string instruments common in the musical system of Europe and changes in music expressions of common system in Iran (Bulookbashi, 2002: 78). Lemaire's apprentices later became the officials and appointed as the head of music bands. Salar Moazzez, one of prominent apprentices of Lemaire, reached to presidency of music department. He was talented in executing Iranian melodies and he even used to change the piano tunings and play the national songs on piano (Khaleghi, 2011: 151-152) such as a piece of music by Salar Moazzez, known as "Māhur fantasy" which is composed for piano (ibid: 153). Ministry of Education and Endowments and Public Benefits issued a verdict to the name of Salar Moazzez and appointed him as the supervisor of the royal orchestra (Bulookbashi, 2002: 85). The players in the intended era concluded that to play Iranian melody, Iranian instrument is not necessarily required but the western ones, expanded more scientifically, can be used and so a step can be taken toward elimination of Iran and west musical differences. To realize this goal, he tried to select parts of traditional music which had moderated, applicable intervals for piano (Sahbaei, 2003: 10).

Abolqassem Aref Qazvini

Abolqassem Aref Qazvini was born in 1878 in Qazvin (Safarzadeh, 2016: 1). According to him, his father, Mollahadi, had been lawyer. He went to Tehran in the midst of the Constitutional Revolution and joined constitutionalists and composed patriotic and revolutionary poems and sang his poems in different concerts with his warm voice (Sobhani, 2007: 607-608). Aref does not forget political changes of society, so that Roohollah Khaleghi considers Aref's melodies including a period of representative history of first 14 years of Iran Constitutionalism (Safarzadeh, 2016: 99). In 1909, concurrent with the tenure of Mohammad Vali Khan as prime minister and formation of second national council parliament, Aref sang in a party, held by

literary branch of democrats on the occasion of Constitutionalists' victory that can be considered as the second public concert of Aref (ibid: 27). In case of Constitutional Era music, the intellectuals start concerts which was a modern phenomenon (Fatemi, 2014: 94). Given the public performances of Aref in Cinema Faroos in Lalezar and Grand hotel and other ones, he can be regarded as a pioneer of music performance in Iran. In this regard, Aref accompanied young musicians such as Roknoddin Mokhtari and Ali-Naqi Vaziri in 1911 during the performance of Garden Party in Aminodolah Park (Safarzadeh, 2016: 34). It can be imagined that companionship with Aref has influenced future activities of these young musicians so that Vaziri formalized music performance later and established a music school that Aref was thinking about. According to Aref, "after travelling to Istanbul and visiting the Turk Dar al-alhan and hearing their songs, I wished to provide a music school as soon as getting back to Iran but alas the subject was terminated before beginning. I even thought about opera and operettas and show it by the apprentices of music school" (Safarzadeh, 2016: 54).

Aref's concerts (Koohestani Nejad, 2005: 147), as one of pioneers of music independent performance in given places, and selling tickets, along with private classes of that time by the masters of music, can be perceived as a tool for musicians to find independent identity. In such an era, the musicians became independent through relieving themselves of the yoke of rulers, socially, and they try to achieve such situation economically by public concerts and private classes (Fatemi, 2014: 62). In past, the musicians never put their names on their works (because it did not matter) and if court musicians, who considered balladry as a low class work for themselves, made a ballad on fun, they preferred not to put their names on it (Fatemi, 2013: 21). Hassan Zandbaf, cited by Jafar Shahri, states that "playing Tar and making Tar used to be considered as forbidden professions and following Satan and the followers of these professions used to be excluded and excommunicated... Tar was regarded as the instrument for immorality and it could be carried only in sack, fund, straw sack, and under the cloak" (Zandbaf, 2013: 106). Yet, one of the specifications of music in our intended era is that the name of musician is accompanied with his work even when they are very famous (Fatemi, 2013: 39-64). Though the arts and artists are also mentioned in this era with other names such as "sanat" and "sanatgar" (art and artist) (Safarzadeh, 2016: 110).

A kind of sociopolitical or protesting ballad is seen for the first time in two recent centuries which was made of musical environment and formal poem, and not by ordinary people. In addition to the fact that those who compose ballads cooperate with famous poets and sign their works, this new phenomenon is involved in high effectiveness of ballad and distancing it from its vulgar counterparts (Fatemi, 2013: 65). This rotation shows the importance of label "musician" as an occupational identity. Aref writes: deceased Iraj Mirza states in his Arefnâme that "you are not a poet but you are a balladeer" (Behkhial 2017: 57). Yet, the specified identity of musician seems to be not much prominent before this era. Therefore, the importance of concerts, besides creation of particular titles for the job such as "balladeer", indicates music movement towards specializing and freedom from vulgar culture. At such a time it's possible to speak of development of a particular class for music (Mallah, 1975: 92). Before it, specialized identity of musician had not been so much popular, therefore a non-existing identity could not have a job as "balladeer" or "musician" and no wonder that highlighting such existence is simultaneous with promotion of concerts and private classes of music (Koohestaninejad, 2005: 125). Aref's concern to differentiate his works from street ballads and also to be considered as an innovative and serious composer, turned to be the concern of all balladeers (Fatemi, 2013: 65). The fame of Aref's ballads, beside the importance of music and musical works as independent activity, made Colonel Pesiyani, who was one of the officials in Iran and studied music in Germany and published two books of music notes there, publish three national lyrics including three works of gendarme lyrics and seven Iranian local songs which involved seven ballads of Aref. This book sale ad was published in Tabriz newspaper in 1925. Aref's ballads were also noticed by Christian Kenayer, the piano master of

colonel in Germany. He adjusted seven ballads of Aref for piano and published in Stuttgart, Germany (Safarzadeh, 2016: 68-69).

The other note: gramophone records had been frequently used for recording Iranian music till 1915 (Sepanta, 1998: 134). Gramophones can be considered as a sign and tool of standardization because they create the power of sound propagation and were a part of modernization. At the end of Qajar regime also Gramophone Company recorded some discs and published with label (his master's voice). Among these discs, there were four discs of Aref's ballads with the voice of Ghamarolmolouk Vaziri as well as discs of republic march (jomhūri marsh) with the performance of music school orchestra (Safarzadeh, 2016: 125).

Ali-Naqi Vaziri

Ali-Naqi Vaziri is the pioneer of modernism and the movement of changing theoretical and practical principles of Iranian traditional course (Miralinaqi, 1998: 11). When Aref was busy with "jomhūri concert" Ali-Naqi Vaziri was trying to open and establish a school of music. He, who had traveled to Germany supported by Mostafa Gholi Bayat (Samsamolmoluk) to study music, came back to Iran after two years (Safarzadeh, 2016: 97). Before traveling to Europe, he first used the lessons of people such as Agha Yavar khan and a priest, known as Parzhoo Fara and then went to Soleiman khan (Lemaire's best apprentice) and became interested in studying harmony (Khaleghi, 2011: 351-352). After Vaziri completed the study of art for five years in France and Germany (ibid: 367), opened higher school of music in 1923 and announced it in Shafaq newspaper (Koohestaninejad, 2005: 99). Vaziri shall be taken into account as one of the Most important founders of scientific music in Iran (ibid, 31). He advanced formal and informal changes parallel with each other. He also had the intellectual as well as theoretical background required. Vaziri is a turning point in the process of standardization in late Qajar and early Pahlavi. Having studied the words of Vaziri, the necessity of changing Iranian music according to him can be figured out. His speeches in four public performances of music school in July 7th to 15th 1925 are the most mature and explicit speeches about his ideals (Miralinaqi, 1998: 62). He says that: "others say somebody (he means himself) is destroying Iranian music! Say which music? Do they mean the music of parties? So it is actually a service, do you mean mourning songs? Be sure that you have to moan till this sadness exists in your taste" (ibid: 79). He emphasizes that "our music has been limited to the repetition of miseries and some ballads which is completely erotic and leads to immorality" (ibid: 78) and he states that: "I shall have a small comparison between our art (sanat) with civilized nations" (ibid: 75). Given his words and that his aesthetic attitude was influenced by western art and culture (Darvishi, 1994: 263), it can be said that Vaziri measures Iranian music and its content with western music. So, obviously this method will be followed by some incompatibilities between source music (Iranian) and destination music (western). Even Aref as one of brokers of standardization, criticized Vaziri's actions. In a paper, titled as "My Judgment" he wrote that "Master Ali-Naqi khan! [...] Iranian music is this though mournful. It neither can be changed nor mixed with western music. [...] I ask you to be either mere Iranian or western in music". "My judgment" is an important paper that can be considered as the musical manifesto of Aref. He knows Vaziri as claiming the invention and modifying and abolishing the music of an old nation and reminds that "Mr. Ali-Naqi khan! Don't be annoyed with me because you owe me. One part of your instrument has been made by me and my songs". By this, Aref refers to the cooperation with him in 1911 in concert of Aminodoleh Park (Safarzadeh, 2016: 111-112).

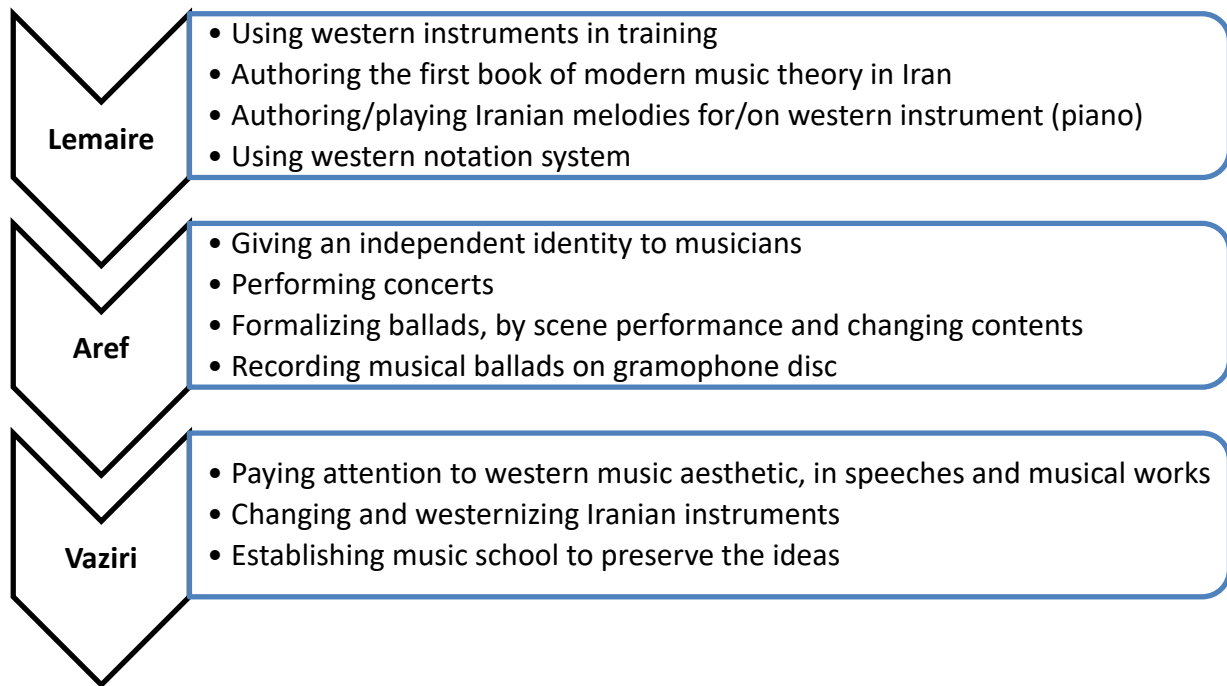
In addition to intellectual aspect, we can see some actions by Vaziri in the field of instruments' structures as well. He created three types of Tar: one of them was smaller, known as soprano. The other, the strings of which had been made of intestine and tuned one fourth bass than ordinary Tar and was known as Alto tar and also bass tar which used to be played with triangular and mandolin style plectrum. By these four types of Tar he was pursuing a four-section orchestra to play harmonic songs (Khaleghi, 2011: 344-345). In such a time, not only western instruments enter Iranian music but the structure of Iranian instrument is

also changed for being close to the standard of criterion music. The process that also happened to Kamānche and changed it from three-string type to four-string one, imitating violin (ibid: 59).

Conclusion

The concept of standardization can explain the change of some part of Iranian music history. What shown in this study with the name of “standardization” in Iranian music, focusing on the activities of three characters (Lemaire, Aref and Vaziri), indicates that the activities of these three cultural pioneers are noticeable in changing the Iranian music from the middle of Qajar to the early Pahlavi. Lemaire started teaching western instrument to the music apprentices of music branch of Dar ul-Funun from the middle of Qajar and at the time of Nasereddinshah and his apprentices transferred his lessons to other generations of musicians. He wrote the first book about the theory of modern music in Iran. He composed Iranian music using western notation system which is considered as the initial steps of standardizing Iranian music in this era. The second figure is Aref Qazvini who, given the open political environment of the constitutionism leading to develop an Iranian parliament in late Qajar, managed to organize his activities for giving an identity to Iranian musicians; through concerts transforming Iranian merely vulgar ballad to a formal political one. Through the new performance, independent concert, Aref encountered people with a music band playing patriotic ballads. The third influential person in this case is Ali-Naqi Vaziri, whose performance in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi well show standardization for training and performing music in Iran, in this field, he goes so far that designs new Tars for moving towards orchestration; as Kamānche was changed by the advent of violin in Iran. To standardize music in Iran, Vaziri established a school and started teaching music scientifically and promoted note writing. Attention to aesthetic of western music and its indicators can be traced in the works and speeches of Vaziri. Therefore, noticing the following table, it could be seen that Iranian music, impressed by modernity, western instruments and notation system, and sociopolitical changes, advanced to standardization and criteria by the activists of this field. Developments in the western world in different fields and expanding it to other areas of the world in some recent centuries in addition to internal sociopolitical changes of societies, led to a kind of standardization for various activities. On Iranian music, as well, standardization could be traced back to Qajar era. According to the proposed information in study, the originality of Iranian music shall be doubted, given the internal and external influences on it, or there might be more particular definition of originality.

Investigation about positive and negative consequences of changing instruments according to the new criteria, new classification of musicians to formal and vulgar, strengthening and weakening Iranian music with recording music through created criterion and other similar cases which are related to the consequences of standardization and the influences of music of different areas in the world on each other, can be followed up in further studies. Including positive or negative changes on Iranian music.



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