

Interview with Morteza Varzi on Gholamhosein Banan

By Peggy Caton

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Transcription:

Varzi Interview on Banan Tape 3

V: and one thing especially about him, I mean, his facial expression was always optimistic, he was always with a very slight of a smile. I mean, in other words, his facial expression did not change. Some of the singers, most of them, pick up an ugly expression, because that's why because he was singing so comfortably, he didn't have to change the muscles of his face. P: so he didn't have to strain. V: no strain at all, coming so naturally P: so he was relaxed V: quite relaxed P: and his voice was relaxed V: relaxed, and there was no change in the expression of his face, always smiling, because, of course, he looked at people, without actually seeing them, he was so concerned, so concentrated. but the smile was always on his face, even more painful pieces than he did. but that smile would change the nature of it, it was cynical, sometimes was smile of giving up, yielding, different types of smile, if you looked at him. He didn't want to appear on TV, that was one of his problems and I wish that he had because now we could have some of those we could see, look at him, he never wanted to do that because that was artificial, he could not sit, stand and sing for a camera.

P: so he needed an audience, then.

V: an audience, he definitely needed an audience. But sometimes, especially after he stopped singing publicly, as my brother says, one day after two-three years that he had not heard his voice, his singing, he picked up the phone and sang for my brother, and he was saying about two-three years ago, it was the same Banan, of course it was a little bit lower pitch, ~~because~~ Banan with all those beauties, all those tahrirs, all those things. He did it just once over the phone.

P: what gave Banan the idea to change to low voice, relaxed, soft. That's very different from the style of his day.

V: you know, he was really an actor, because I told you he was a great comedian, so when he wanted to sing, he would put himself in the position of that poet, with all those thoughts in his mind. everything. He would visualize what condition was Hafez at the time he wrote and he put himself in that position. That's why he was so away from, in the audience, but away from the audience. He would ~~take~~ put himself in the ~~era~~ of Hafez, in the place of Hafez and then that's why he was not himself actually, he was doing what he thought Hafez would do.

P: so he wasn't thinking of what the style of the day was.

V: No, not in choosing that. He just came automatically. But he knew what to choose so it ~~is~~ was just like driving. After so many years of driving you do everything automatically.

P: But in way, he picked up local accents and was able to imitate how people really were, it seems that he was somehow responsive to how people really were, rather than some way they were thinking they should be. Let's say these singers were singing really high and strained and a certain style ^{ized} way, seems like he was more responsive, I mean I don't know, I'm just thinking V: He was P: more responsive to how people really were and how they felt V: right, but he was so sure of himself, the impression that he wanted to give people, that he was not worried about the audience; he didn't sing for the audience as such

he needed an audience, but he needed an audience to inspire him. And sometimes at home when he was taking a shower, shaving, he would sing. small pieces and I remember at times he said how did you like this what I did right now, I mean he tried by himself, I think he did a lot of times, maybe he even thinking, through thinking he would do the singing and try new lines of tahrir so it became just the nature of him

P: so he was innovative V: experimenting all the time, yeah, innovative, right.

P: was he influenced in his voice quality at all by Western style singing

V: he tried, he liked Western style singing

P: because the idea of an open-throated, low, soft relaxed voice was more Western V: right P so I don't know if there was any coincidence V: He talked, just by accident, talked an old lady who was a piano teacher and a vocalist and he said that she said when you sing you should sing from here not from here. He talked about that, so apparently he had chosen how to sing based on what he had heard or what he had read or I don't know, but at times he tried to sing like a Western vocalist and in some of the pieces, ^{like} he has a number of Deylaman but in one of them, the vibrations are quite Western and he sings direct lines and in a way I can say he was trying to modify in other words to make Persian singing more perfect by learning something from Westerners, who did opera, for example.

P: so he picked up from them as well as all these other influences¹
V: right.

P: how much did he improvise when he was performing

V: a great deal

P: but it had a system to it?

V: it had a system, sure. The system was based on the poetry that he chose. That's why he worked at a piece of poetry, just wanted to know beforehand how he should go about this poetry. He wanted to give himself, through the channel of time, go to the Hafez time or with Rahi Moeyeri's which was modern, so he would try to find himself in the body of Rahi Moeyeri while doing this line ~~kind~~ of poetry and then from then on the audience had nothing to do with it.

P: how much would he improvise on the raddf, he stayed close to the radi

V: yeah but sometime he improvised, he actually, I didn't know until 2-3 months ago, just by accident, I was writing down this song in Shur, this avaz, for my students, and I noticed in Shur you start in daramad, then Shahnaz and then Qarache and then Razavi and then Hoseyni but in this particular song it is daramad, then Razavi, in other words he picks up Razavi from the end of the octave and then bring it to the beginning of the octave at this improvisation, he feels that he wants to do it this way and then after Razavi he goes to Qarache and goes to I mean goes to Shahnaz and then to Qarache.

V in certain gushe, he picked it up from the way Saba did it because Saba actually wrote most of his radif by sitting with Zia Zakerin, ZZ would do the singing and Saba would put them in notation, so Saba actually got some of the vocalist principles into his style of playing. That's why Banan could pick from him again in this way, the way Saba tried to ~~regularize~~ regularize, to bring, because when Zia Zakerin sang, he did not know what he was doing, he just learned from his teacher and of course had his own style. He could not explain to you what he was doing, the way Bahari would not explain what he was doing because he has no intellectual knowledge of what he was doing. He was just coming out of nature and skill that he has. So some of the gushe he did it the way Saba played it or the way Mahjubi played it.; So he would bring all these things as the basis for his improvisation, he would use all these materials to choose a style to put particular particular line into singing.

P: so his improvisation would consist of the type of ~~the~~ tahrir he chose V: type of tahrir he chose, the style of performance, instrumentalist like for example Saba did it, so he had all those things and he would pick up from them and combine them and make, because that's why I said when you, there are three Segahs that I have in mind that are totally different as if coming from three different singers.

P: you mentioned that the daramad would vary greatly depending on the poetry. Would the rest of the dastgah performance ^{also} vary greatly V: prob. exactly P: so there's a great range of interpretation of style, & everything that you could have

V: right, sometime it had become second nature for him, wouldn't have to think about it it would just come out naturally but he was P: but you mentioned he would sometimes actually think about it V: yeah, think about it P: ~~when~~ what he was going to do V: right and you could see that he was singing with a closed mouth, he would hum it actually at times and he would make his plan how many ~~of~~ lines of his poetry is going to be done at times there ^{were} lines he would sing separately, he would know which line he was going to do, number 1, maybe number 2 came at the end of the line, number 3.., he would change that also. So sometimes he changed the line, sometimes he changed the place of the radif, based on his feelings, which he thought should come first.

P: Why is he considered so great, what is his place in Persian music. Why haven't more people written about him, why did Safvate not include him in his book and why don't some people know about him? but they know about Payvar, Parisa, Karimi and so on. I didn't have the impression that many of the people with conservatory training thought of him as one of them.

V: the point is that those who were the conservatory type musicians they did not believe in anybody who did not finish conservatory. They said they didn't know anything and conservatory graduates thought that Western music has to be the basis if Persian music wants to develop, wants to be better, has to be based on Western music. Number 3 whoever didn't know notations, was bad. That's why, exactly what Khaleqi thought, that Bahari couldn't read, write music, so he has to be out. It was not only in the world of music, it was in other areas. You know how much they stressed

they stressed lisansie, karmand-e lisansie. Lisance dare, or Lisance nadare. Lisance was that important, to have a degree from a university was the main thing. So ~~xxxxxx~~ if you did not have a degree from a university, you were no good. This is from the conservatory.

Safvate--Safvate and his group was a mystic. He belonged to Alahi group of darvishes and they think that the musician should not drink, should not smoke, should not sing in public, should not sing for the fun of the people, and Banan did all those things so for them Banan was out. And that was wrong. They should give him credit for his knowledge, for his style of singing at least. But they never considered, they never talked about it. That's why in the Safvate book, there were a number of names, they were not there. For example, Ebadi's not there. He talked always against Ebadi. Ebadi doesn't know how to play setar, He doesn't know how to keep rhythm. That's what made Ebadi angry and had one piece organized, arranged, and played by him with an orchestra, something like a setar concerto, just to show him he could do it. These are reasons beyond, had nothing to do with the world of music.

P: well also, Banan didn't have, I don't know how many credentials Banan had from traditional players, for instance, Karimi studied Davami and studied with Haji Aqa, both of whom in the line of Mirza Abdollah and in the line of all of these people. And Banan studied from religious singers. Now is this considered one of the reasons why they might not talk about him as much, because he studied with religious singers?

V: Well, Karimi talked a lot about him but he did not officially. He talked to me, he said eh second book I do should he all Banan's style, but he didn't say this to Safvate, you know, this is the Persian way of diplomacy, hiding their own, their real feelings and then in Persian music there is a kind of maturity that you need in order to appreciate music. Here we had with Farid Farjaz, the two young people were here the other night. They all conservatory graduates and the other one had an addition, had been accepted two places, Philadelphia philharmonic orchestra and Columbia ~~xxx~~ as a director. But he doesn't want to go. He said for the first time in their life they are appreciating Persian music and they think they are wasting their time in Western music. So you need this maturity. Safvate despite his knowledge about, is not still mature yet. I mean, it's impossible to believe that somebody who plays setar himself and say that Ebadi is not supposed to play setar. Didn't give himself a chance even to listen to him, because he drinks or because he smoke opium. These are other elements to do with their judgements, not academic.

P: Let's say someone like Borumand, what did he think about Banan?

V: I don't know because I never talked to him..

P: around musicians, I never heard Banan's name mentioned that much.

V: and all of a sudden, Banan had become a figure, became a legend. I told you this Farrokhzad had a program on TV, and would take the loudspeaker go in the public and ask questions from people. Somebody was going to bread, he would stop him and ask him question. And when it came to the question who were their favorite singers, ~~xx~~ he would hardly find anybody not mentioning Banan.

P: why did they say Banan was their favorite Singer

V: because everybody knew that Banan was great. They did not ~~xxx~~ even know his greatness.

P: what was great about Banan

V I don't know was great in their mind. Of course ~~wha~~ I know what is great about him. Great about Banan. You have to go to the original question, the main question. What is music. Music is something to change you, to take you out of yourself. That's a mystical question. Take you away from yourself and as I told you how to play. You must forget about yourself. Go into the body of a bird and try to fly and go higher and higher. In the mystical world we say, just to join with God. And Banan gives you that impression. No other singer does that. Banan takes you away from you.

P: how does he do it.

V: Well, just the way he sings. the way he impresses. He actually analyzes the lines of poetry, when he sings a line of poetry they know what he means. but when Shahidi or even when Shajarian does it, because they do not understand poetry the way Banan does, so naturally they cannot impress you with P: so they're not conveying the real meaning

V: no, they change the accent, sometimes they break the word half here and there, for them it's nothing, it's there, they just use it, but they do not use it properly.

of half

P: what's the connection/with the process, is hal part of this

V: hal exactly is the state that you have to be put into, taken away from yourself. When you're conscious of yourself of your environment, where you're sitting, what's you're doing, what you want, well that's not half. Hal means to take you out of yourself and take you with him wherever he wants to take you, just like a plane.

P: so hal is the state you're in, and he takes you someplace.

V: yeah, he puts you, the way that he gets you out of yourself when you for example you play an instrument sometimes you do certain things that you do not choose to do, it just comes because you are getting out of yourself. And the more you get out of yourself, the more you get into the state of hal which some people think that hal is by drinking and by smoking, I mean artificial. P: well that's a way of getting out of yourself

V: yeah, that's one way of getting out but sometimes the music can do it. With me, Bahari, Ebadi, Kasai, Banan, Adib Khonsari, they are the only people who can totally take me away from.. But like Golpaygani, he does at the beginning, but all of a sudden he does something wrong and I'm back here again.

P: but hal then is not the goal, hal is the vehicle V: right

P the goal is something else (V: right) P some kind of understanding or reunion, or something. It sounds like there's two things involved. One is to get you out of yourself and the other is to do something to you while you're in that state

V: Yeah, exactly, that's what I was going to say. When they keep you out of you, it's just like you are driving a car.

You drive with your car into a workshop, car needs some repair

You get out of the car and let them work on the car, whatever is needed. They do the repairs, everything, you go back in the car and drive it out smoothly. So in singing, ^{in music} when they take you out of yourself, away from yourself, through this music it does something to your body to your mind, this rest that it gives to your mind, that you're not thinking at the moment, this rest that it gives to your mind, to your muscles, to your nervous system, after that you are, you're just free, just like you've had a purgative and you've got rid of everything. You are pure and simple now. This is the nature of hal.

P: it's like meditation, in a way.

V: right, exactly. And it takes some of the weight off your shoulders. After this music you feel much light. You don't feel that heavy. You don't feel that you're sitting here, feeling your leg against the cushion, things like that. It purifies. In order to purify you it has to take your soul out of your body and let your system, and then let your ears do the work on your body, just like a mechanic, while your soul as the driver is sitting waiting for your car to be ready. By the time you put them back together, yek nafas bekeshand. Then again as I said to certain friends in San Jose, there are certain mystical needs of your body, that's what meditation does to you, you need meditation and through music this gives you this chance to do it. Sometimes you don't even know that you need this hal. And then the only people that ~~xxx~~ can put you easily in that state of hal, so people do not forget.

P: can you be put as easily into that state of hal as easily by a recording of Banan as you can when he's right there in front of you?

V: Well I can, again, I may be an exceptional case, because I'm so much dedicated to him. And I ~~x~~ know so much about him that when he sings in the tape, it's as if he's sitting with me. I just go with him, vocally without any voice, but I go every note with him. At parties, you know, unfortunately, because you used to drink, you know, and it was this artificial hal would be confused with this other half. They were both there, you know. But I don't know what percentage was this and what percentage was that. But with the tape it's different. In the morning, for example, normally now these days I listen to Banan when I'm sober, actually. I ~~listen~~ in the morning. And after the end of the tape, if I have anything on my mind, any problems, it's just out, I have no problem.

P: So Banan can be your call to prayer

V: exactly

P: so it does some of the similar things that chanting or prayer does

V right, exactly.

P: so maybe he learned from the religious singers, what to do

V: yeah, exactly, it is the feeling, because his mystical feelings because he was religious, in a way. He does the chanting actually. He said from the beginning he like to go to tazie, to listen. In those years he did not know music. He did not know a good

need

singer or a bad singer. It was a mystical, a religious need in his heart. Maybe generation after generation has come to him, to go to tazie. I(?) used to go to tazie, and we had them every month, actually the first of each month, somebody came to our house. And I was the only child who was impatiently waiting for them to come and I would go upstairs because I didn't want anybody to see me cry, I would go upstairs and hide in some corner while listening, and crying, I knew.....

If there was somebody and I missed them, I had to find an occasion to cry and the need is still with me. Crying is one of the means of purifying me. And Banan gives me that chance. He really easily brings tears to my eyes, tears of joy, tears of glory, tears of history, tears of P so he touches people V right.

P: Can you at all put your finger on what it is that he did that created this hal. Was it a combination of all these things or

V: combination. It was to be a combination.

P: Was there anything essential, anything that's even beyond the combination of things that he did, something internal that he felt or was able to do or some way that he was, something about his character, his feelings.

V: He was a very bad character. I hate to talk about that. He was very jealous if he found... One day that was when he was living across the street from my house, there was on meidan-e kakh, there was a liquor store. I was coming back from work going home and I saw Banan was coming with a policeman. The night before he had a party and he ordered some beer. They had to open the beers and then they had to put them back and had taken them back to the liquor store, wanted to sell them back, to get the refund, and they had noticed. So he had to come home and call the police. And fortunately he got there before the policeman had got this little boy. I told him, "What are you doing?" He said they won't take the beer back. I said why should they, it was opened. He said, you are right. And immediately he started crying, kissed him., panjshambe anam. There was something in his body, sometimes he want to force, be oppressive, but he soon was convinced. It was like someone who drunk, who didn't know what he was doing, like he was asleep and walking and if you shook him he would wake up.

P: So he was very emotional

V: very emotional and very cruel at times and jealous

P: very intense

V: very intense

P: now were these some ~~km~~ of the characteristics that caused him to be able to ~~km~~ touch people that way

V: since I never wanted to think about these negative aspects, I never thought about those things, to analyze them.

P: but it's somehow part of the picture

V: must be apart of it. I mean such a person can easily cry and can easily take a man to the police in order to take him to jail and as soon as I wake him up started to bring tears in his eyes and give him panj tuman anam.

P: he didn't hold anything back whatever he felt (he ack~~ted~~ out)
 V: he couldn't, he would sing it out

P he was so controlled by what people thought or any of these other things
 V: right

P: freely expressed what~~ever~~ he felt at the time, right?
 V: exactly

P: so that ~~he~~ gave him the freedom to express in avaz
 V: and I think he was so comfortable, so at ease that every evening he would voice out all his sorrows. Some people want to find a place, just to shout, to cry, but he didn't need to do that because through those lines of poetry that he chose and through the music he chose to listen to and the environment that he chose to be in, he gave himself what he want, what he needed actually and through the channel of singing, he would sing ~~them~~ them out. So after that he would start to eat and drink and just to become an animal.

P: Now why did he drink so much.
 V: He couldn't tolerate the group there. He was very selfish as I told you. He wanted to have everything according to his own wish. And at those parties he didn't have it, there was always something wrong. So that's why most of these musicians, performers, especially, went to alcohol and then narcotics, just to forget where they are. Because sometimes they knew

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but since he was so proud his work he didn't want to impair the image. That's why he loved to drink, he loved to smoke, he loved to eat. And normally at the parties he was invited, they made things that he loved, but he didn't touch them, because for him singing was the most important thing ~~in~~ of his life and then as soon as he was through with singing, he didn't care. So he was proud of what he was doing. Most of the musicians are not proud. They become spoiled actually if they get a lot of applause, ~~but~~ He received a lot of those things at parties that he went, but ~~none of them~~ applause never spoiled him. He was always after perfection. He was a perfectionist. And he was ~~successful~~ in his singing, he was really perfect.

P: So his greatness came with the fact that he knew music well, he was very careful, he crafted it very well, he was able to he knew the meaning of the poetry and he could interpret well, he knew how to put poetry and music together so that they fit he was technically very good and he had an ability to interpret and express V: right P and touch people's hearts V: right P in a way that took them, did what the mystical experience was supposed, that took them from their everyday experience and have them transcend.

V: like some imitators, or what you call, those who show, I mean like Little, who make his face like Nixon, I mean act like Nixon, they know what to do with their face and with their voice to look and sound like Nixon. Banan could do that exactly with his voice, I mean, if he wants to impress, if he wants to

show sadness, he knew what to do with his voice to show sadness. Sarcasm, he could show it. He knew the meaning of all these things. As an actor, he knew how to act, so he took a part of his acting into his voice and made an actor out of his voice. So he could imitate Adib-e Khonsari, exactly like Adib. But while he was singing, a part of Adib was in his voice. He could sing like Hodayun pur, for example. Sometimes he picked these people and tried to sing like them. But his face, he could make himself like anybody he decided to. So he had this power of controlling himself and he had so much power in controlling his voice from the beginning to the end he knew what he was doing, and as I said by doing it over and over again, a part of it had become his nature. It came out automatically. He didn't have to do it intentionally, ~~he~~ decide to do so. And then again I think that has nothing to do with him, it was the quality of his voice, like Pirnia said, just like a velvet, so soft, no matter how high and how low he did, the softness was still there. He never, of course at parties after he drank he did, he tried to sing as high as anybody else could and would make mistakes, but normally when he did that he would not sing in the..he normally would go to the bathroom or go to the balcony because I'm sure his face would change also, that's why he never did it in front of other people.

P: so sometimes he would sing when he was drunk, but not in public.

V: yeah, no I mean, very private, at our house, for example. Normally sometime he came, we would bring some kebab kubide or kalle pache, he would buy it himself, put it on the floor and starting eating and drinking immediately. He didn't come to perform there, and of course, music came afterwards. But there he didn't care, because he knew if he did a mistake, ^{or something} which happened very often, tape, we would just erase it, ~~just~~ ^{don't} keep it there. He was at home, I mean, he didn't have to worry about when he came with us or two-three other people that he had nothing to worry about, went to be with them. But invited at parties he was very careful. He was very careful that his trousers were right. He ~~just~~ wanted everything to be perfect. He was a perfectionist.

P: Why were these pieces outstanding.

V: I think one of the other reasons why people liked him and had so much respect for him because they could go to cabaret-- shekufenow, for example, Golpaygani was there, I mean everybody that they loved, that they liked, but they could see Banan nowhere. I think for them it remained a mystery.

P: So he didn't perform at any cabarets.

V: He was there and he wasn't there. He never performed at those nightclubs, he never performed on TV. Talar-e Rudaki was built after he retired. So for them ~~it~~ he was a mystery he was a legend in his own life. All they knew was his own recordings. And through the radio portion of his performances. The songs that most mohseni made, there were 6-8 you know and there were happy small pieces that people liked. So they knew that Banan could do these things also, even better than others.

P: he could do tarane-e ruz.

V: Yeah, he could do it, a lot of them. He never said ^{no} go where his duty was concerned. If they wanted him to sing seriously of course nobody would tell him what to sing or which line to choose etc.

P: So he reached all stratas of the society.

V: Yeah, because, I mean I heard it myself on TV. There was an amale, or I don't know, carrying dastmal-e mive, so he stopped him, a number of questions, and said "Who are your favorite singers?" He said, "Googoosh, and Aqay-e Banan." Banan was Aqa.

P: In ~~anyway~~ it sounded as though he was connected to him.

V: Yeah, and because some of them they say when his pictures they showed. He was husky, muscular and was not thin, which they normally hated, would say, he is heroini. He didn't look heroini, didn't look tariaki, and everyone knew he didn't smoke opium and that was very important for people. Banan doesn't smoke opium?! How come? Maybe you don't know. I said, what do you mean I don't know. I live with him day and night. So these things created for him. And he never had any incident, love accident I mean to be known to everybody. He was so careful. Very hardly people knew who he was in love with, or going with at the time, he was careful, out of respect that he had for who the girl was. So these things, people talk about these things. They never saw any picture of him driving fancy cars, or dancing tango or rock and roll, which most of the singers did.

P: Well, he was more a classical singer ~~than~~ though than..

V: right. A person like Ghavami. He was a classical singer, a very nice person. But since he came to TV, people lost their interest in him. They knew him through his voice, but after they saw his face, they thought maybe it was two different things. He was not popular any more. It was just like Iraj. People loved his voice and they loved his voice in the character of any actor who did the acting. But when he came on TV people lost interest in him, when they saw him in person singing. They thought he was the wrong person because he should like the actor who did the singing on film, pictures. People respect their imagination, what they make out of Banan, if you break that, if you give something else instead, people get insulted, so they were wrong. When you picture somebody in your mind, you picture the way you want him, based on singing for example. So they are happy with that picture. Alahe came here. I told her, I said, don't go on TV. I didn't tell her why. Keep herself a secret, keep yourself a mystery. She didn't listen to me. She went on TV ~~and then~~ next week/and then everybody was talking about it, how ugly she was, how old she's gotten. The reality. Alahe in their mind, because they always thought about Alahe 20 years ago, but now see Alahe twenty years after.

P: but maybe also it was because on TV there was no audience and there was something different about having no audience. while you were
V: right P like Banan wouldn't go on V: Yeah, he didn't performing want to go, he didn't want to do that because he said I don't want to sing in front of camera.

P: So, there's nothing else?

V: the Russian opera singer, he

P: he listened to tapes

V: last time I heard his voice, 28, 1310, imean I bought records recorded at that time, Shyapin was in Russia and there were two, the top, like Maria Callas, became so well known...Caruso. ^{in Italy} and Shyapin was in Russia. Very famous names in Iran in those years and he always talked about them and tried to sing like them. And he was really full of fun. When he was around, everybody laughed and he made people really laugh. He was not the type, a friend of mine told me, by talking he can make you laugh, by singing he can make you cry. His characteristics can be divided into two things. He loved singing, he made you laugh, by singing he made you cry.

P: Did he ever sing funny songs?

V: Sometimes. Sometimes the funny songs that were around, he would sound even funnier.

P: Would he do it often?

V: No, if something become famous, he tried to do it to show he could do it better. It was part of his jealousy, that's why he did it. It should be like this, and then he would do it.

P: Did he mainly sing dastgahs in his parties?

V: Yeah, mainly. Sometimes he would try to recite poetry and then gradually bringing in singing. And then he would tell ~~you~~ ^{me}, can you pick up your violin, or something. If nobody around. But if there were some performers around he would wait. He would not start immediately ~~playing~~ ^{sh} because they are playing he would sing. He never sang unless he was prepared and nobody could force him to do that and nobody did, actually.

P: Now, he sang tasnifs as part of his dastgah.

V: He did more zarbi things than tasnif. Because tasnif he said sometimes they asked him to do that and he said no, ~~because~~ that needs an orchestra. He did mostly zarbi things.

P: Did he do tasnifs of Aref in the parties?

V: small tasnifs.

P: So he would do some zarbis and. he did old tasnifs?

V: Yeah he did old tasnifs.

P: But he wouldn't do tarane-ruz or new

V: He would try to bring out something new and normally he would rather do zarbi, to pick up, say I found these few lines and pick up the drum and do it zarbi. He would rather improvise most of them than read something that was written already.

P: so he didn't do popular things at parties.

V: no he didn't. But if he did popular things, he did things that were popular at the time. Not that he liked them but they were popular at the time. Like Zohre, for example, when Zohre came, it captured the whole country. And he would

do Zohre a great many times.

P: So he did that in the parties, you're saying. ~~xxxx~~
(V: yeah.

P would he do it after the dastgah.

V: no, no, no. Well normally dastgah came later in the evening. What I am talking about is the beginning, before the supper. He normally sang at private parties at the end of the party. At formal parties, at the beginning of the party because he wanted to start to eat and drink afterward.

P: At formal parties he sang at the beginning.

V: at the beginning. In private parties he did try to make people laugh by saying stories, philosophizing, and making small songs here and there, or doing some zarbi and then gradually going into classical singing.

P: after dinner.

V: yeah, it was normally after midnight. Midnight, 2 3 o'clock in the morning. He never did it at the beginning. anything serious. Because he was never serious at parties. He wanted to make fun of people, make people laugh.

P: So he did things like Zohre, or this and that
VL right. After supper they bring out candles, turn
R off the lights and everybody should be quiet. Children
should be asleep. Then he did avaz.

P: at formal occasions, for an event, he sang dastgah at the beginning. V at the beginning, right. Phe did not sing tarane and son on V no, always serious. Unless there was a song he wanted to impress somebody with, maybe ~~xxxxxxx~~ a new tasnif that he ~~just~~ been out, of his own. Like Nava-ye Ney. There were certain tasnifs which he did very often. Nava-ye Ney was one of them.

P: was he known for that?

V: Yeah. Navay-e Ney ~~is~~ was Anjoman-e Mu Melli. It was also recorded for Golha, but it was the same thing recorded. Yeah, Nava-ye Ney, I had forgotten, was one of the original ~~type~~ top of the town. Top of all of them. Mara Asheqi wcame afterwards.

P: ~~Best~~ Among Best known works.

V: right.

P: who composed that?

V: Mahjubi and Rahi Moeyeri lyrics.

P: but that's not a real popular thing, you know, it's not like tarane-e ruz. V: navay-e Ney? P Yeah

V: no, but it's outmoded ~~here~~ ^{now}, because ^{it was} ~~he~~ sang it, 2-3 years it was always at any party, he would sing it or people would have him sing it.

P: well which of these, all of these pieces you mentioned, people will keep listening to year after for the next 50 years.

V: There are two types of people, people who were familiar with music, so they knew what to ask for. People who were not

familiar with music, they asked for whatever they remembered at the time and they tried to show that they remember something. Sometime they asked him to sing the thing that he didn't like. The thing that he had done at the radio just to be paid. It was okay, but that's not his favorite. Ask him, he said, those trash, you can hear them on the radio. He would reject that. But Nava-ye Ney is one of the songs that he did very often.

P: let's say what do you think people will remember, the things that will really say (not random) in people's minds, the real classics.

V: That's a good question. I think there is one song, the lyrics are so simple, they are not mystical, like Dishab be Khane- Ma Amadi, in Afshari. People loved that very often. People can sing it actually so they asked him to sing it and they normally talk about this. If you say ... Ban, they ask do you have that tape? This is one of the ~~the~~ tapes that they ask for normally. But future generations it's difficult to say.

P: Deylaman?

V: And especially he did once Deylaman without music. Well I can say Deylaman has been ~~xx~~ overused now, but maybe 10 years from now, it is a different story. I think you have to ask that question 10 years from now. It's not something we can talk about now. Especially I am not impartial, I think of my own taste.

P: Well which one do you like the best?

V: It's really hard for me to say. It depends what mood I am in. For me he has one Shur, these days I repeat over and over again, there is one Segah, one Shur that ~~is~~ he has really shown his skill in showing the significance of the poetry, giving, haq-e shehr ada mikonad, they say in Farsi. He gives the poetry the right it deserves. That's a Shur, a program that he did for Sa'di. I think his greatest mystical work is one he has done in Mahur, and the lyrics are Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi. I think that's his best job, actually, because he believes in that line of thought.

P: is this part of Golha, is this separate, what

V: it was a part of Golha, Rangarang. It was just avaz, he does those few lines.

P: Rumi

V: Yeah But he does it as singing, actually, I must make a copy of it and give it to you because the lyrics are, maybe I have it here..

P: These pieces that you said are well known, would you also consider these like his best works also.

V: Among the best works.

P I have down in my notes that your brother said that basically the secret of Persian music would be found in his works and have down in my notes that your brother said that on the interview

V: I said that. It said we should use his voice. Now if you want to make any research about Persian music you should do it based on his voice, because there are so many things involved in his voice that can be good answers to a number of questions. What is Persian music. How it should be done. What do we mean by improvisation. In each of these question he is actually top. Well, it has to be analyzed I mean I cannot give you an answer right now but I know I found a way to sit and do the research, tape by tape, right them down. Then by reading all those notes, get something out, classify them rules, actually.

P: Anything else

V: While he's singing, in a way that he's actually talking to you, says, Maro! Maro! You hear him giving any order

P if you think of anything...

V: Well we talked about the radif that he used. Sometimes at the beginning of a radif which normally is the daramad sometimes he disregard this rule because he starts with the opening line, but the subject in the first hemistich doesn't go with the daramad. In one particular charagah that he has done, the opening does with hesar, so he start with Hesar and then skillfully modulates into daramad and goes on and on and on.

P: Whose radif did he base his on?

V: It must be Zia Zakerin. We don't have any radif for avaz actually. The only thing written is Karimis which is nothing I mean. We cannot talk about radif as such.

P: What as it Nayeb Sultanah and those

V: We don't know. What Mirza Abdollah and Aqa Hoseynqoli have done that's what the radif of Tehran at the time but in Esfahan it was different. It's really hard to say. But there is no systematic radif that you can compare, if he's doing it against it or out of it or what.

P: Or who he's following V: following, right it's a mode of singing that's different from Tehranix ~~Esfahanix~~ which is different for Esfahani or different from Mashadi, Khosani. Khorasani is just like Shajarian, like Ghavami. ~~Esfahanix~~ In Khorasani? style the lines were just straight lots of tahrir with no specific type of tahrir. In Esfahan the lines are not as straight, they are circles, sometimes sometimes line.

P: Did he sing Tehrani style?

V: No, he did a mixture. Esfahani and Tehrani. More Esfahani than Tehrani.

P: Who did Zia Zakerin study with? V: I don't know. Of course one of his son is still living in Mashad, I hope somebody someday maybe he knows and I'm sure. When his father died he was ~~30x~~ almost 30 years old and he must remember, must have heard his father talking about.