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A Celebration of Zarathushti Music and Musicians

The Sounds of
Ancient Faith

Traditional Persian Music

Parsi Festive &
Devotional Songs

Profiles of Zarathushti
Musicians on the Indian,
Classical Western and
Rock/Pop/Jazz scene

Featuring Maestro Mehli
Mehta, Maestro Zubin
Mehta, Composer Sorabji
and Freddie Mercury

FEZANA

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

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ON THE COVER: Patriarch of the illustrious Mehta family, Maestro Mehli Mehta; portrait by W. M. Conte.

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■ EDITORIAL ■

This issue of FEZANA Journal is devoted to Zarathushtis who have contributed in no small measure to the performance and appreciation of music. Throughout history music has been an art form that has permeated every human society, and has been an important adjunct to rituals and drama. It has been credited with the capacity to reflect and influence human emotion. Music is a protean art; it lends itself to various alliances – with words, as in song and operatic drama, and with physical movement, as in dance. Appreciation of music, whether one performs or just listens brings a cultural richness to any community.

Not much is written about music of ancient times, but oral tradition gives us enough information to know that all societies through the ages had music as part of their daily lives. Societies in different areas of the world generated their own entertainment, developing folk music that strongly reflected the trends in their culture. Much of the traditional Persian classical and folk music today has probably survived through oral tradition in Iran and music of countries like India, Pakistan, Egypt and the Middle East.

The courts of the Persian kings encouraged performance of music, drama and recitation of poetry. Dr. Pallan Ichaporia states [*in Modern Concise History of the Parsis*]: “The long reign of Chosroes II the Sasanian king who ruled over the Persian Empire from 590-628 AC, is known not only for extending the frontiers of the Persian Empire, but also for the great patronage to music and musicians – and this is recorded in the rock carving at Taq-e-Bustan showing his retinue of musicians. Nakis and Barbad were the great musicians-poets in the court of Chosroes II. Rudaki the musician-poet at the

Samanid Islamic court was viewed as the reincarnation of Barbad.”

The Islamic terminology of music is developed from Sasanian practice. The highest and lowest notes on string instruments ‘zir’ and ‘bam’ are Iranian. Some musical instruments in the Islamic world bear the Iranian Sasanian names: ‘ney’ (flute), ‘sitaar’ (small flute), ‘zurna/surana’ (oboe) and ‘kamana’ (violin).



Composer Jean-Phillipe Rameau premiered his opera *Zoroastre* on December 5, 1749 in Paris. Its USA premiere took place in Boston on May 20, 1983. The story deals with the character of Oromases (Hormazd) as the king of the gods and Zoroastre as a good man who valiantly fights evil when his faith is challenged and wins, whereupon Oromases rewards him with sovereignty over the earth.

Mozart’s immensely popular opera *Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)* which premiered September 30, 1791, brings in the character of Sarastro (modeled upon the enlightened spirituality of Prophet Zarathushtra) as the wise and enlightened leader of a priestly brotherhood. Mozart’s first symphony, *Mithradates*, is named after Emperor Mithradates II, a Parthian king of Iran.

As we approached modern times, indigenous music began to be influenced by the music of other cultures. Western and Indian music began to make their impact. Society encouraged this artistic permeation with zeal. Irani and Parsi families began to appreciate the universality of the celestial art of music. Gradually, the desire to learn to play different instruments took hold. Before long, technology brought to us the radio, gramophone, TV and other amenities that facilitated the appreciation and learning of vocal and instrumental music. In the twentieth century, families started to encourage their children to study Western, Iranian or

Indian music. The piano and violin, particularly became popular instruments for study of Western music. A 1989 study of 2000 Parsi households in India, determined that in 76% of the households at least one member studied or performed in some form of musical art form.

The late Ardeshtir Bazadeh is considered the greatest Zarathushti ‘daff’ and ‘tonback’ player of Iran. Acclaimed singer Dariush Yazeshni of Iran is known to sing Persian songs (that go back generations) with immense passion and fervour.

By the mid-1930s Indian music, classical and popular started becoming immensely popular among Parsis. Zarine Daruwalla, Firoze Dastoor and Behroze Chatterjee are just a few of the many shining stars in the arena of Indian classical music. Parsis began to take pride in their own Gujarati festive songs and sang them on a variety of occasions.

The more internationally known musicians like pianist Bhikaiji Palamkote, composer Sorabji (who holds the record for writing the longest musical composition), conductors Mehli Mehta and Zubin Mehta glamorized the performance and appreciation of Western classical music. An all Zoroastrian Women’s Orchestra performed in the 1920s and 1930s. Popular Western music got the attention of the youth and performers like Freddie Mercury gained tremendous international recognition. The bands of Khodaiji, Goody Seervai and Nelly became hits in India.

Today we have several tremendously talented Zarathushti musicians whose artistry will gain them worldwide fame in the years to come. Zarathushtis have shown talent and appreciation for music of different cultures of the world and this has enabled them to enrich their own lives and cultural heritage. ■

Khorshed Jungalwala
Chair, FEZANA Publications
Associate and Licentiate of the Trinity
College of London in Piano and Voice
President of Metrowest International
Concerts Association, Boston

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Noted philosopher Emile Durkheim said: "A religion is a unique system of beliefs and

practices relative to sacred things." This is transferred to our understanding as two complementary parts; the first being *beliefs* and the second *practices*, which include rituals and way of life. The passing on of any religion requires imparting religious education from generation to generation. This is equally true for the Zarathushti religion and its earnest followers.

The major core of Zarathushti beliefs is the words of the prophet as found in the Gathas. Scriptures in the Younger Avesta are easy to understand. As Zarathushtis we are familiar with our daily kushti prayers and other prayers like the *Sarosh Baj*, *nayaishes* and *yashts* to memorialize the immortal Amesha Spentas. The learned priests, of the past and present age, have preserved the religion to the best of their abilities. It is our responsibility to understand the message and act accordingly, so that, in our humble way, we can make the world progress towards perfection.

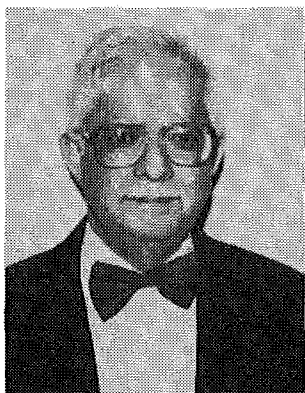
Some of us are well versed in the translations of the Gathas. But most of us are not exposed to the other messages of our scriptures, like the *Yasna*, *Visperad* and *Vendidad*. Let me introduce you to some words of wisdom from our ageless scriptures.

He who seeks fame becomes nameless, but fame belongs to him who does not require it.

- Dinkerd Book VI

If the good thought has no place in your body, then your soul has no place in paradise.

These ten things are very similar:
Generosity and squandering;
True speech and egotistical speech;
Diligence and harshness;
Confidence and impudence;
Alacrity and laxity.



A wise man knows which is the one and which is the other.
- Aturpat-I Emetan, Author of *Dinkerd*.

This is character: a man who by himself does not tell a lie to anyone.

This is wisdom: a man to whom no one can tell a lie.

This is peace: a man who is at peace with his own soul.

This is standard: a man who does not commit excess or deficiency.

This is law: a man who stands by the religion of Ohrmazd. - *Dinkerd*

May in this place:
Harmony triumph over contempt,
Affection over enmity,
Benevolence over miserliness,
Modesty over vanity,
Truthful speech over falsified speech
and everything that violates truth.

- *Yasna* 60.5

The vitality of soul is from character,
The vitality of wisdom is from patience,
The vitality of affluence is from truthfulness.

Together these three are known as humility.
- *Dinkerd*.

It is worthwhile to remember that these words were conceived during the Sasanians and improved in the 7th - 9th century. What can we do to ensure that our heritage is preserved? It is our responsibility to learn as much as we can ourselves and pass on the knowledge to the next generation. I assure you that at FEZANA, we will continue our efforts to bring and perpetuate the message of the prophet and our scriptures. ■

Framroze K. Patel
President, FEZANA

FEZANA UPDATE

From the Vice President

For Darian's Sake

At the end of January, Framroze (Patel), Dolly (Dastoor), Homi (Davier), and Aban and Purvez (Rustomji) invited me to attend the February meetings of the World Zoroastrian Congress Steering and Executive committees. I gladly accepted the invitation. On the evening of February 19th, I arrived at the Houston International Airport where I was met by the smiling faces of Yezdi and Magdelina (Rustomji). I was taken to Aban and Purvez's home where I received the most gracious hospitality. On Saturday, I attended the all-day meeting of the steering committee. I was extremely impressed with the courage, kindness, quiet confidence, motivation and the capacity of Zarathushtis of Houston for risk-taking, hard work and engaging in frank and respectful discussions.

On Sunday, after participating in the Executive Committee session I became more aware of the enormity of the task that Zoroastrian Association of Houston and member associations of FEZANA have assumed by accepting the onus of organizing the Seventh World Congress to be held in December 2000 in Houston. As I listened to the deliberations, I realized that this congress might turn out to be a historical and watershed event for Zarathushtis of North America and possibly the world.

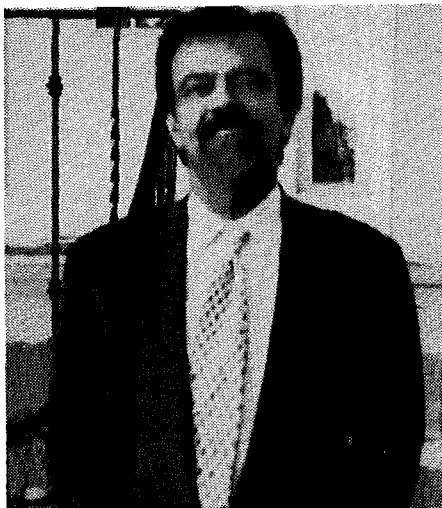
FEZANA JOURNAL INVITES YOU TO "ADOPT-A-READER"

There are many interested anjumans and individuals, in Iran, India and other countries, who would like to read **FEZANA JOURNAL** but cannot make the payment. Can you adopt a reader? Please consider sending gift subscriptions to an anjuman or to your family or friends or individual of your choice, or donate to the "Journal Gift Subscription Fund". Please make your check payable to FEZANA and mail to FEZANA treasurer, Rustom Kevala [see back cover for address].

I worried that if we fail to achieve our high goals for this congress we might disappoint other Zarathushtis and ourselves. But such a possibility seemed remote when I remembered the calm and determined faces of Sarosh, Farrokh, Kaemerz, Magdelina, Yezdi, Aban, Purvez, Rustom, Dariush, Fereshteh, Jamshid, Arnawaz, Behroz and others who had sat around this table the previous day. I wondered out loud why other Zarathushti luminaries with a long and consistent record of service were absent from our deliberations. I was reassured that every effort would be made to bring all willing and capable Zarathushtis on board with this project.

At noon, the Gahambar ceremony commenced. Six mobeds performed a splendidly elaborate jashan in front of a large and attentive audience. It was simply an uplifting event.

The most joyous moment of my trip arrived when I was introduced to my youngest relative, Darian, by his parents, Drs. Mehrdad and Dina



Bahramipour (better known to the Zarathushtis of Houston as the "Dentist Couple"). For three hours that day, Darian looked and smiled and

hung on to me. He was amazingly mature and well behaved for his age (only seven months old). He did not cry even once. He was indeed very nice to me. I assumed that he knew that I, in some insignificant way, was involved in an endeavor which would have an effect on his future. I must admit that I could not be as mature as he was. When I was leaving them, I had to fight back my tears.

My fellow Zarathushtis, Houston is a great city. Zarathushtis of Houston are extremely kind and capable people. The Congress promises to be an exceptionally meaningful and joyous event. Please contribute in whatever way you can and above all do plan to take the Journey to Houston. Darian and other Zarathushti children of Houston will be waiting for you. ■

By Ardeshtir Anoshiravani, M.D.
Vice-President, FEZANA

From the Secretary

In the early years, FEZANA remained a "best kept secret". While the founders and pioneers of the federation paved the way, it was virtually unknown among the majority of Zarathushtis spread wide around North America. Thanks to the efforts of FEZANA Journal and North American congresses, thousands of Zarathushtis reaped the benefits of this umbrella organization. It may, however, still be a long way to achieve its mission: *"to be a federation committed to putting the Zarathushti community firmly and clearly on the North American map" and "to provide effective leadership in addressing the critical issues of our times, with wisdom and righteousness."*

In the old days, in Iran and India, being a Zarathushti and belonging to the local anjuman was a major part of



life for most Zarathushtis. The anjuman was the focal point of community decisions, the source of income and livelihood, and particularly, protection against the majority government. The youth were heavily involved. Local Zarathushtis took ownership of the issues, and there was little discord in principles and practices. The anjumans, the religious rituals and community functions were very relevant and much needed on a daily basis.

FEZANA and North American anjumans cannot succeed fully unless they become relevant to the everyday lives and needs of mainstream Zarathushtis, and particularly to those of the new generation. They have to move beyond the bureaucracy and paperwork, non-compromised requirements and following the interests of small groups. Our

limited resources should be spent where it pays the most. They need to understand and respond to the needs of today's community.

FEZANA cannot survive unless it becomes relevant to everyone, everywhere in the present time.

At the 1996 AGM in San Francisco, FEZANA representatives and association presidents met and developed a *Strategic Plan for the North American Zarathushti Community*. This blueprint includes items under the headings: "Learning to Live a Zarathushti Life", "Thousand Points of Life", "Internal Structures" and "External Structures", and is an excellent guide for developing policies and focusing efforts. We need now a critical mass of individuals within the committees and communities to take on the challenges and draft a golden future for FEZANA, that is both realistic and relevant. ■

Ushta Té
Mehran Sepehri
Secretary, FEZANA

ZAGNY sets sights on a larger Darbe Mehr

The Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, in New Rochelle, New York is now "no longer adequate for religious class activities or social programs" states a letter from Gev Nentin and Homi Byramji, "The structure can accommodate only 99 persons. We are no longer able to hold our large functions at the Darbe Mehr and classes have to be conducted in hallways or in shared and noisy places." With the objective of "creating for ourselves a religious and community center that can support us now, and keep the community together for our children ..." the Board of Directors of ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York), IZA (Iranian Zoroastrian Association) and DMZT (Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Trust) have jointly begun a process to research alternatives. Three committees have been chartered to do Needs Analysis, Alternative Site Analysis and to provide an Interim Facility.

Council of Iranian Mobeds Celebrates Tenth Anniversary

Over 500 Zarathushtis celebrated the tenth anniversary of the *Council of Iranian Mobeds in North America (CIMNA)* at the Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Westminster, near Los Angeles on Saturday, May 1.

A jashan and prayers were conducted by Mobeds Mehraban Zartoshty (chair), Shahriar Banki, Keikhosrow Khorshidian, Bahman Mobed, Behram Shahzadi, Hormozdyar Khorshidian and six young pre-mobeds. Mobed Fariborz Shahzadi, being out of town was unable to attend.

Keynote speakers were Mobed Hormozdyar Khorshidian and Mehrban Oshidari. Youth from the Avesta classes performed several cultural and religious programs.

Open minds lead to open hearts

For the overflow crowd gathered in the main hall of the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in Burnaby, BC on February 28, there was much anticipation in the air. The famed media personality Monika Deol was gearing up for her introductory speech at the first annual Career Fest 1999: "A Look at Careers of the Future".

The exciting and energizing presentation by the Indian-born CITY TV/MUCH MUSIC/VTV Entertainment News Anchor, was inspiring. Some key words stressed by Deol were 'education', 'adaptability', 'balance' and 'volunteer'.

Following a welcome by ZSBC (Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia) President Bella Tata, moderator Anand Atal led the line-up of panelists, each coming from various careers and educational/experiential backgrounds, who gave their personal reflections, shared stories, learning experiences and advice about their life and career paths.

Many panelists mentioned a key point – to keep an open mind by not setting limits for oneself. Through education, determination, passion and motivation, one can ultimately achieve one's goal. Education encompasses not only technical development, but more importantly, personal development (interpersonal skills, values, etc).

This is excellent advice from successful people who absolutely love what they do. The message was clear: study hard, work hard, do what you love, love what you do – and having an open mind will lead you to the right path.

By Susan Kaboly-Zadeh
North Vancouver, BC

[Susan is a 4th year Sociology/Anthropology double major with a Communications minor at SFU with a love for writing and poetry.]

By Ervad Jal N. Birdy
President, NAMC

The North American Mobeds Council (NAMC) held its annual meeting at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr in New Rochelle, New York, on April 2-3, 1999. Fifteen mobeds, mainly from the Northeast attended the meeting.

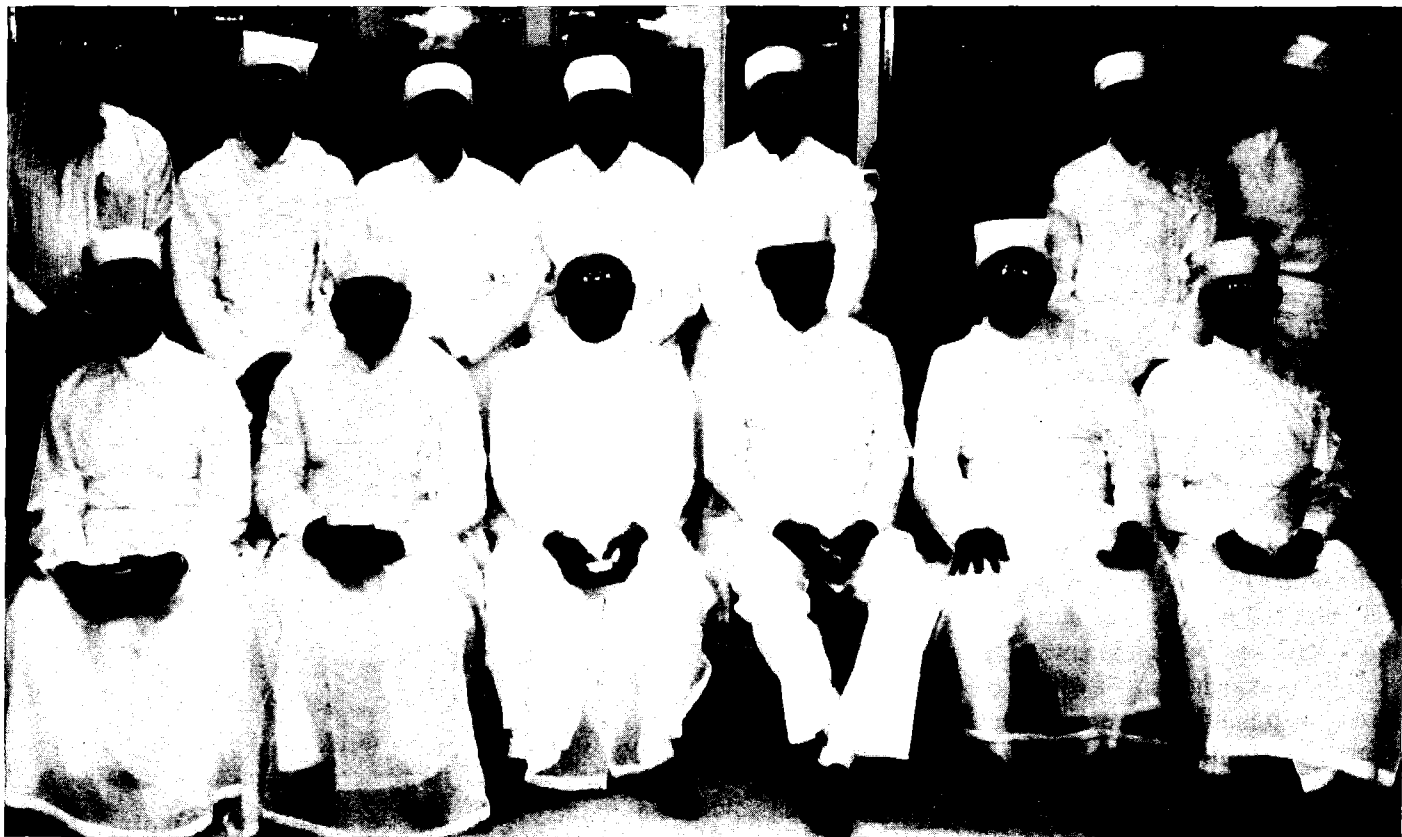
NAMC has been in existence in an informal capacity since 1983 and was organized into an official non-profit organization in 1993 under Canadian law. Until recently, most of the NAMC mobeds were from the Northeast. Last year, however, after the publication of the special mobeds' issue of *FEZANA Journal*, many mobeds from other regions of the continent have become members of the Council, boosting its ranks to about 70 this year.

Besides the primary objective of serving the spiritual needs of the community by performing religious ceremonies like jashans, navjotes, weddings and funerals, the aim of its members is to expand and improve their own spirituality as well as their knowledge of our history, theology, doctrine and rituals. Only by so doing do they hope to emphasize the teachings of Zarathushtra and rekindle the faith and devotion in their coreligionists on this continent.

Definition of a Zarathushti. The mobeds' deliberations ranged around many topics this year. The most important one dealt with the definition of a Zarathushti. Mobeds have been debating this issue intensely for the past three years since, from the time of its inception, NAMC's constitution has been silent on defining a Zarathushti. This year, at their first-ever Extraordinary General Meeting, a resolution, which defined a Zarathushti as a person born of at least one Zarathushti parent was finally put to vote. This, being considered a very important issue for the Council and the community, involving a change to our long-standing traditions, a 75 percent majority was

North American Mobeds Meet

At their annual meeting this April, the North American Mobeds Council votes on the "Definition of a Zarathushti."



Mobeds at the NAMC meeting, seated l to r, Ervads Dr. Jehan Bagli, Yezdi Antia, Bomanshah Kotwal, NAMC President Jal Birdy, Noshir Karanjia, Behram Panthaki. Standing l to r, Ervads Kobad Zarolia, Pervez Patel, Adi Unwalla, Nozer Kotwal, Gev Karkaria, Kersi Bhedwar, Dr. Darius Antia and Dr. Mehroz Rabadi.

required from the 58 voting members for the resolution to pass. In fact, the resolution was defeated, since it received only 40% of the votes. So, until 75% of the mobeds can agree, NAMC will continue to function without an explicit definition of a Zarathushti in its constitution.

Mobed training. Recognizing their need to pass on their responsibilities to the younger generation, NAMC mobeds have embarked upon the important task of training young mobeds in performing the more common rituals like the jashan, etc. Mobeds from the East coast organized the first-ever 3-day training camp for young mobeds in Washing-

ton, DC last August. Hands-on practice in performing the jashan was provided to all attendees, together with meanings of the prayers and explanations of the rituals. A special prayer book to serve the immediate needs of the younger mobeds is currently in the process of being published. The camp was hailed a tremendous success by both students and teachers and it is hoped that future camps can be organized in other areas of the continent to provide a more widespread coverage.

Mobedyars. In addition to the young mobeds who attended the camp, there were four potential *mobedyars* (or paramobeds) who also took the opportunity to obtain the training.

Mobedyars are Zarathushtis from Athornan or Behdin families, born of both Zarathushti parents, who are keen to serve the community in areas where ordained mobeds are either not available or are in short supply. The Council members thanked Ervads Adi Unwalla, Jehan Bagli, Cawas Desai and Behram Panthaki, who played an active role in organizing this camp.

Jashans Around the World. Other potential projects on the NAMC agenda this year included a request for organizing jashans around the world as part of the World Zarathushti Congress - 2000 next year. NAMC has agreed in principle to take on this task.

World Religions Center, Japan. Another project, in which NAMC will be giving their input to FEZANA, involves setting up of a World Religions Center in Japan, where basic information on the great religions of the world will be displayed. This project is initiated and funded entirely by a Japanese philanthropist, whose aim is to further the understanding between the various cultures and peoples of the world.

A Basic Text. The mobeds also reviewed another project, which saw fruition this year. This was the publication of the hardcover textbook titled *The Zarathushti Religion – a Basic Text*, which NAMC reviewed and sponsored together with FEZANA. This basic text is filled with useful information on practically all aspects of the Zarathushti religion and culture and is aimed at both Parsi and Iranian readers. Differing points of view are presented in a discreet manner to avoid hurt feelings. Copies of this text are available from local associations. A donation is sought so that similar projects can be undertaken in the future.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included three issues of FEZANA Journal last year, to which members of NAMC have contributed significantly and the delicate question of dealing with social issues like the spiritual aspects of pulling the plug on terminally ill persons.

It was two days of stimulating and rewarding discussion and exchange of ideas between the mobeds, without which they would be working in a vacuum. The meeting ended with a grand jashan after which NAMC President Ervad Jal Birdy thanked all the mobeds for attending the meeting. His special thanks also went to the host community for their hospitality and to the local mobeds Ervads Pervez Patel, Shahpur Doctor, Darius Antia and Meheroz Rabadi, who together with their families made their two-day stay a very pleasant and fruitful one. ■

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

Warmth for the homeless

Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Buddhists join forces to feed and shelter the needy this winter

BY RON CSILLAG

*Reprinted from
The Toronto Star,
January 30, 1999.*

*Right, Multifaith effort:
From left, Rabbi
Michael Stroh, Imam
Sayed Muhammad Rizvi
and Zoroastrian priest
Nozer Kotwal discuss
the project.*



Spurred by the plight of Toronto's homeless, four religions are acting on their spiritual values and, in the process, exemplifying how much disparate faiths can have in common.

A synagogue, a mosque, a Zoroastrian congregation and a Buddhist temple – all clustered on the west side of Bayview Ave. near Steeles Ave. – have joined hands to become partners in Toronto's 12-year-old "Out of the Cold" program, which shelters and feeds the homeless during the winter months, every night hosted by a different group.

Every Wednesday in December, Temple Har Zion, a Reform synagogue, took in an average of 40 homeless people (referred to as 'guests') for a hot meal, while about two dozen slept the night on thin mattresses set up in the synagogue's lobby. Clothing, toiletries and other items were also supplied.

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario then took over, hosting the homeless

each week until February 10 in a nearby commercial space.

The Jaffari Islamic Centre ... will take in the homeless from mid-February to the end of March at a nearby Muslim school ...

Nozer Kotwal, a Zoroastrian priest, says feeding and sheltering the destitute, especially during the recent cold and snow spell, gave the 500 family members of his congregation "a way to put our religion into action."

A faith founded 3,500 years ago in what is now eastern Iran, its most basic teachings, as proclaimed by the prophet Zarathushtra, are good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Kotwal says the congregation's 80 volunteers for the program were also inspired by a Zoroastrian prayer in which they say that God's "very strength and power are reserved for those who succour the poor and lowly." ... ■



The 2000 International Year of Thanksgiving in Dallas. *The opening Event titled "Thanksgiving – Spirit of a Thousand Years" was hosted from March 12-16 by the Center for World Thanksgiving at Thanksgiving Square in Dallas. The Zarathushti table, adorned with a beautiful gold Fravahar plate, joined those of other major world faiths. Mitra Valatabar, President of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas represented the Zarathushti faith in two days of interesting exchange of ideas and better understanding of the meaning and philosophy of the religions of the world.*

Interfaith in Edmonton

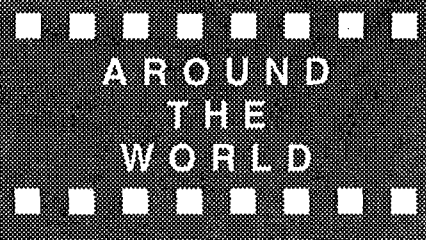
As part of the Edmonton, Alberta, Interfaith activities, Firdosh Mehta was invited to make a presentation to the Garneau United Church congregation, on February 21. He spoke about the value of interfaith activities as they apply to smaller communities of Edmonton, such as the Zarathushti community: "Working together as an interfaith group brings us a degree of confidence of recognition, of acceptance and a welcome feeling in the larger community."

72 Hours

For 72 hours, from December 31, 1999 through January 2, 2000, faiths around the world are invited to participate in an unprecedented act of inter-religious global cooperation. Organized by the United Religions Initiative, people of faith will mobilize their communities for peace building by: peace vigil, prayer/meditation; cooperative local action; call to political leaders; and solidarity in conflict zones. Contact Rohinton Rivetna, (630) 325-5383.

Jashne Sadeh celebration in Washington State.

Behram Deboo (below) conducted the prayers at the Jashne Sadeh celebration organized by the Zoroastrian Society of Washington State. His wife, Manijeh, in traditional Zarathushti costume, gave a short talk.



Expanding down under

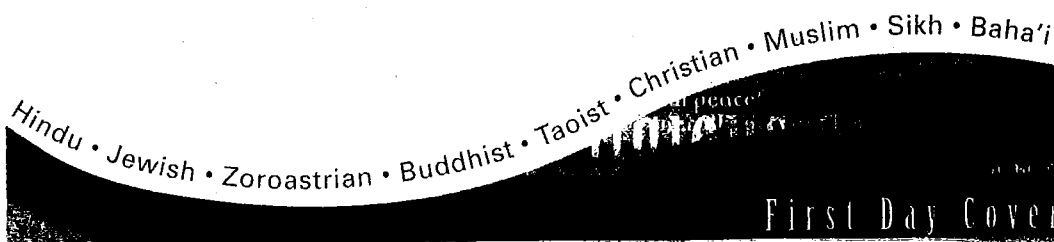
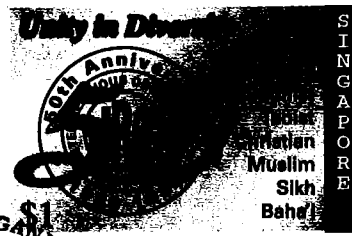
"Our community is growing rapidly and the existing structure will be outgrown in no time as greater number of children are participating in Sunday School activities and elders in religious talks," writes Arnaz Bana, chair of the Fund Raising Committee of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW. AZA House, inaugurated in 1994, has been the venue of the community's many and varied activities – Sunday school, prayers, muktad, jashans, gahambars, navjotes, birthdays, AGMs, talks, cultural activities and sporting events. Items on the agenda for future expansion include: classrooms, lecture hall, caretaker's residence, memorial rose garden, playground and tennis, volleyball and basketball courts.

Fitting tribute to JRD

The Maharashtra government has declared the historic bungalow in which J. R. D. Tata lived, a protected monument. There are some sentiments, however, that feel the step is not enough, and a fitting tribute to this great son of India, father of civil aviation in that country, would be to name Mumbai's Sahar Airport after him. ■

Subscriptions

FEZANA Journal has become an important item in many Zarathushti households in North America today. If you enjoy reading the Journal, please make it possible for others to share that experience, by donating subscriptions to organizations, libraries, colleges, friends and relatives, here and abroad. We have set up a Subscription Fund, and would like to invite you to take pleasure in contributing towards this worthy effort.



Karachi Zarathushti Banu Mandal completes another productive year

The Karachi Zarthushti Banu Mandal, under the leadership of President Hutoxy Cowasjee, according to its annual report (presented in a most attractive manner with eye-catching illustrations by Sheeraz Wania), has expended "imagination, effort and resources to improve the quality of life" of its 2,000 plus Zarathushtis of Karachi, as well as aiding innumerable projects and charities worldwide.

The **Special Projects** subcommittee presented workshops: Vision-2000, Trust Building, Effective Leadership and Know Your Child; supported cricketer Meher Minwalla; donated books to Mama School; conducted English Language classes; organized melas and bazaars; printed a Services Directory and a Blood Donors Directory; organized the "Befriend a Family" project; assisted in gene research; presented their cookbook to Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Pakistan; supported a Mother and Child center; and completely revamped their Constitution.

The **Welfare** subcommittee spent Rs 1,037,231 in donations and special projects for the elderly, poor, supportless and less fortunate members of the community. The **Rehabilitation** subcommittee spent Rs. 76,838 and gave Rs. 300,000 in loans to provide remunerative opportunities to ladies and promoting business enterprise. The **Medical** subcommittee assisted 39 Zarathushtis with medical expenses, expending Rs. 468,846. The **Education** subcommittee expended Rs. 237,461 plus Rs. 80,000 in loans to students. The **Child Welfare** subcommittee made an outlay of Rs. 58,373 for children's activities. The **Program** subcommittee staged a natak; organized Jashne Sadeh; and skit competitions.

A small organization with a very large heart, the talented and dedicated ladies of KZBM need to be saluted for their contributions to the community in Karachi and world wide. ■

Proposed Inter-Religious Theme Park in Japan

In a letter to FEZANA president, Framroze K. Patel, Dr. Michiko Ito, President of ASCA Horin Overseas Cultural Exchange, in Tokyo, describes plans for an inter-religious theme park in Japan.

The group plans to "establish a University of World Religions in a Theme Park, where people from all over the world can learn about different cultures, history and educational philosophies...Temples and churches of major world religions will be built so that the harmonious coexistence of different religions can be witnessed."

A 100-acre plot of land has been donated for the project by Mr. Tatsuya Kamei, a surviving victim of the Hiroshima bomb as a memorial for his 17-year-old daughter who died from inherited leukemia. The project will be also supported financially by visitors and shoppers at a co-located international market. There will be no financial burden on the participating temples or countries.

"We know that if one studies all the major religions of the world," writes Dr. Ito, "one will finally trace back to Zoroastrianism. Therefore we sincerely hope that you will contribute to world peace by joining us in the above endeavor ... and send us a request indicating you would like to have a Zoroastrian temple within the proposed Theme Park."

Subsequently, Framroze Patel met Dr. Ito in New York. Excerpts from his letter are given below: "... It is my understanding that the foundation will meet all capital and operating

costs of the University and the temples in the Park. I have consulted some leaders of my community in North America. The reaction so far has been that your vision, in principle, merits support. ... FEZANA is a federation of 23 Zarathushti associations in North America. Eventually, when your proposal is fully discussed, they will need to find a majority consensus on it." Framroze further indicated that "Since Iran is the cradle of the Zarathushti religion, we recommend that you communicate directly with the Tehran Zarathushti Anjuman."

"... By tradition, only Zarathushtis enter the first two categories of our temples (Atash Bahrams and Agiaries), and before installation on their altars, their fires have to be consecrated by many priests through special ceremonies stretching over weeks. They are both difficult and expensive. The fire has to be thereafter tended night and day through 'boi' prayers, entailing a minimum retinue of 3 special priests.

"Consequently, these two categories of temples do not exist outside the Indian sub-continent and Iran. In all other countries, Zarathushtis have therefore only established the third category of temples, i.e. Dar-e Mehr, as places of worship. Tradition does not require the fire on the altars of the Dar-e Mehr to be consecrated or tended day and night by an ordained priest ... Wisdom suggests that, respectful of tradition ... the one built in the Park should take the form of a Dar-e Mehr ..."

FEZANA JOURNAL continues to grow in size and quality bringing you a wealth of inspirational and educational articles and community news and views. Starting with this issue, the Journal will have a color cover. While the Journal is produced *entirely* by voluntary staff, to keep up with high printing and mailing costs, subscription rates (in US\$) will increase as shown, effective October 1, 1999.

	US	Canada	Overseas-Sea	Overseas-Air
1 year	\$15	\$20	\$22	\$30
2 years	\$28	\$37	\$42	\$57
3 years	\$40	\$52	\$60	\$80

کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان سال ۲۰۰۰ هوستون

صفحه فارسی گاهنامه فزانا آری باتفاق جهان میتوان گرفت با همکاری دکتر مهران سپهری دبیر فزانا

هفتمین کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان : از ۲۸ دسامبر ۲۰۰۰ تا ۱ ژانویه ۲۰۰۱ در شهر هوستون آمریکا تشکیل خواهد شد. امید است که در این همایش بزرگ بیش از ۲۰۰۰ نفر از سراسر جهان شرکت کنند.

کمیته سازمانی به ریاست دالی دستور و همایی داور از سال پیش شروع به کار کرده و کمیته های مالی، برنامه ریزی، روابط عمومی، و غیره در تدارک برگزار کردن هرچه باشکوه تر این کنگره هستند. اطلاعات بیشتر با فرم های ثبت نام به تمام انجمن های زرتشتی فرستاده خواهد شد.

این کنگره همچنین شامل مسابقات ورزشی جوانان و نمایشگاه هنری است. کنگره نیاز به کمکهای فکری و مالی همه زرتشتیان دارد. امید است که این همایش بزرگ سبب نزدیکی و اتحاد بیشتر زرتشتیان جهان شود.

مسابقات ورزشی زرتشتیان آمریکای شمالی : در رشته های انفرادی و گروهی در تاریخ ۱ تا ۴ جولای ۹۹ در کالیفرنیا جنوبی تشکیل خواهد شد. جوانان زرتشتی از سراسر آمریکا و کانادا در مسابقات ورزشی مختلف و برنامه های تفریحی شرکت می کنند.

کتاب سرزمین جاویدان : مجموعه مقالات و سخنرانی های کنگره جهانی زرتشتیان ۹۶ در تهران بزودی منتشر می شود. این کتاب ارزنده به همت دبیر خانه کنگره زرتشتیان جهان در تهران به ریاست دکتر مهیار اردشیری تهیه شده و شامل عکس های رنگی و گزارش کامل این کنگره تاریخی است. برای پیش خرید این مجموعه نفیس لطفاً با دبیر فزانا تماس بگیرید. **کانون فرهنگی زرتشتیان در ونکوور :** به همت آقایان فریبرز رهنمون و دکتر ایرج پور کریمی مدت چهار سال است که در شناخت فرهنگ و آیین ایران و آداب و رسوم زردشتی فعالیت دارد. **گاهنامه پیک مهر :** این نشریه ارزنده به همت دکتر مهربان شهروینی از ونکوور منتشر می شود شامل خبرها و مقالات اجتماعی و دینی با ارزش است. برای اطلاعات و اشتراک این نشریه لطفاً با ۶۰۴-۹۸۶-۷۵۵۰ تماس بگیرید.

مرکز زرتشتیان کالیفرنیا : در کالیفرنیا جنوبی برنامه های دینی و فرهنگی را برگزار میکند. دفتر و نیاشگاه هر روز باز است. ماهنامه مرکز به سردبیری موبد بهرام شهزادی دو ماهه منتشر می شود. با ۷۱۴-۸۹۳-۴۷۳۷ تماس بگیرید.

از انجمن موبدان تهران <کنکاش موبدان> : موبد بزرگ فرزانه رستم شهزادی در نامه ای از گاهنامه فزانا قدردانی نمود. سپاسگزاریم. **نامه های رسیده دیگر :** از دفتر انجمن زرتشتیان تهران و هم چنین دبیر خانه کنگره زرتشتیان جهان پیام شادباش رسید. بسیار متشکریم. نوشته فرزانه شاهرخ وفاداری از انگلستان در باره چهار شنبه سوری و برگردان سرود های اوستا رسید. که در آینده چاپ خواهد شد. چند نامه از آقای جهانگیر موبد گشتاسب اشیدری دریافت شد که باور های خرافاتی زرتشتی و مطالب چند نشریه را بحث کردند. **کنکاش موبدان :** آمریکای شمالی به ریاست موبد مهربان زرتشتی دهمین سالگرد فعالیت خود را جشن گرفت. **کانون فرهنگی زرتشتیان ایرانی تورانتو :** هر ماه کلاسهای آموزش اوستا و دین دبیره را برگزار می کند. گرد همآیی گروه سالمندان کانون در روزهای شنبه هر دو هفته یکبار می باشد. برای اطلاعات بیشتر با فرشیید بهبودی با شماره ۹۰۵-۸۸۱-۴۳۹۹ تماس بگیرید.

COMING EVENTS

Tirgan

Festival of Rain

By Joseph Peterson
Kasson, Minnesota

Rain festival. The festival of Tirgan is observed on July 1 according to the Fasli calendar. Primarily a rain festival, it is one of the three most widely celebrated feasts (along with Mehrgan and NoRuz) of ancient Iran, and is even mentioned in Talmud.

Tir, or more properly, Testar (Av. Tishtrya) is the yazata presiding over the star Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, and over rain. Testar Yazad is thus especially invoked to enhance harvest and counter drought.

Besides an afringan or jashan dedicated Teshtar, there appear to have been many customs associated with Tirgan. Mary Boyce [*Persian stronghold of Zoroastrianism*] mentions a game of *moradula* (bead-pot) or *chokadula* (fate-pot). She also relates the custom of tying rainbow-colored bands on their wrists which were worn for ten days and then thrown into a stream.

During her stay in Sharifabad, Boyce observed that many of the charming old Tirgan customs had died away by the 1960s leaving "merry-making by young people and children, who with a happy license ... splash and duck one another in the village streams."

Legend of Arash the archer. Tirgan is also associated with the legend of the arrow ('tir') which is briefly alluded to in the Teshtar Yasht [Yt. 8.6].

"We honor the bright, khwarrah-endowed star Tishtrya who flies as swiftly to the Vouru-kasha sea as the supernatural arrow which the archer Erexsha, the best archer of the Irani-

Calendar of Festivals

June - December

Maidhyarem Gahambar

Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram Thu Jun 3 - Mon Jun 7 (S)

Homaji Baj

Mah Daye, Roz Govad Wed Jun 9 (S)

Pir e Sabz Festival

Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran Mon Jun 14 - Fri Jun 18 (F)

Pir e Banu Festival

Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram Sun Jul 4 - Jul 8 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher Tue Jun 29 - Sat Jul 3 (F)

Jashne Tirgan

Mah Tir, Roz Tir Thu Jul 1 (F)

Fravardegan/Mukhtad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

Gatha Ahunavad - Vahishtoish Sun Jul 18 - Thu Jul 22 (K)
Tue Aug 17 - Sat Aug 21 (S)

Pateti - Navroze

Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd Fri Jul 23 (K)
Sun Aug 22 (S)

Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad Wed Jul 28 (K)
Fri Aug 27 (S)

Fravardian Jashan

Mah Fravardin, Roj Fravardin Tue Aug 10 (K)
Thu Sep 9 (S)

Maidyozarem Gahambar

Mah Ardibehesht, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Wed Sep 1 - Sun Sep 5 (K)
Fri Oct 1 - Tue Oct 5 (S)

Paitishahem Gahambar

Mah Sheherevar, Roj Ashtad - Aneran
Sun Sep 12 - Thu Sep 16 (F)

Jashne-Mehergan

Mah Meher, Roj Meher Sat Oct 2 (F)

Ayathrem Gahambar

Mah Meher, Roj Ashtad - Aneran Tue Oct 12 - Sat Oct 16 (F)

Jashne-Abangan (Avan Ardivisur Parab)

Mah Aban, Roj Aban Tue Oct 26 (F)

Maidyoshem Gahambar

Mah Tir, Roj Khorshed - Daepmeher
Sun Oct 31 - Thu Nov 4 (K)
Tue Nov 30 - Sat Dec 4 (S)

Jashne-Adargan

Mah Adar, Roj Adar Wed Nov 24 (F)

Death Anniversary of Zarathushtra

Mah Daye, Roj Khorshed Sun Dec 26 (F)

(F)=Fasli, (K)=Kadmi, (S)=Shenshai

ans, shot from Mount Airyo-khshutha to Mt. Khwanwant. For Ahura Mazda gave him assistance; so did the waters ..."

An expanded account is found in Mirkond [*History of the Early Kings of Persia, translated by David Shea, p. 175*]:

Erekhsa Khshviwi-ishush (Phl. Arash Shivatir, i.e. Arash of the swift arrow) was the best archer in the Iranian army. When Minochehr and Afrasiab determined to make peace and to fix the boundary between Iran and Turan, "it was stipulated that Arash should ascend Mt. Damavand and from thence discharge an arrow towards the east; and that the place in which the arrow fell should form the boundary between the two kingdoms. Arash thereupon ascended the mountain and discharged towards the east an arrow, the flight of which continued from the dawn of day until noon, when it fell on the banks of the Jihun (the Oxus)."

The Story of Tirgan. The following story from the Persian Rivayets [*Dhabhar p. 342, Antia's MS, f. 330*] ties together many of these elements.

"It is related that when the wicked Afrasiab, the Tur, ruled over the country of Iran, it did not rain, at that time, for 8 years. Afrasiab, the Tur, asked the wise and astrologers why it was not raining. Zu Tahmasp answered: "You turned faithless, because Fereydoon had allotted to you Turkestan (only) and entrusted it to you, whereas he had allotted Iran to us and given it to us. You turned away from that covenant and set it

aside. It is for this reason that, owing to this sin of yours, it does not rain."

Afrasiab asked how this could be ascertained. Zu Tahmasp said: "I shall throw an arrow from here, and where my arrow falls, there will be the boundaries." Afrasiab accepted it and entered into a compact thus: "I shall consent to have as the boundaries (of my territory) that place where your arrow settles and I shall go out of Iran."

When this compact was entered into, it was on the day Tir of the month Tir that Zu Tahmasp uttered the name of God and threw the arrow from Iran and that arrow fell in Turkestan by the command of Lord Ohrmazd. When the arrow settled in the country of Turkestan, Afrasiab took this witness that the rains did not come on account of his faithlessness. Then Afrasiab arose from that place and went out of Iran with his army and settled in the country of Turan.

"The news of this spread on the day Govad and heavy rains poured down. Then they assented to institute a festival in Iran on the day Tir of the month Tir and upto now the dasturs of Iran write a *nirang* (formula) and tie it on the hands of the faithful and remove it from their hands on the day Govad, throw it into the sea on that day for the reason that the glad tidings of the return of Afrasiab to Turkestan had reached on the day Govad. It is for this reason that this *nirang* is untied from the hands and thrown into the sea so that all calamities may sink into the sea." ■

Avesta language classes

Avesta language instruction is being given by two assistants of Professor Martin Schwartz, at the Berkeley University campus every Sunday afternoon, starting March 1. Contact Mr. Ghaed at (510) 440-1990.

1999 FEZANA AGM

The Twelfth Annual General Meeting of FEZANA will take place on Saturday, June 19, 1999 at Key Bridge Marriot Hotel in Arlington, VA. A meeting of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress 2000 will be held at the ZAMWI center in Vienna, VA, on Sunday June 20. Social events and workshops will be arranged for the evenings of June 18 and 19. Contact Mehran Sepehri, FEZANA Secretary at (408) 866-8633.

Kankash-e-Mobedan Classes/Camp

The Kankash-e-Mobedan continues with its monthly religious classes in three locations in Southern California: Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley on the first Sunday at Rocket Bowling Alley; Orange County on the 2nd and 4th Sunday, in cooperation with the California Zoroastrian Center at the Dar-e-Mehr; and San Diego on the first Sunday at the Stanley Park Recreation Center.

The Kankash summer religious youth camp in San Jose will be held August 5-8, at Rustom Guiv Dar-e-Mehr in San Jose. \$110 per youth (\$80 for siblings). Must be 9 years and up. Contact Kankash-e-Mobedan, PO Box 22911, San Diego, CA 92192.

Camp Pardis in Toronto

The annual six-week youth camp will be held from July 5 to August 13 at the Darbe Mehr in Toronto. Sponsorships for a deserving child of \$360 for the full six weeks or \$140 for 2 weeks are sought. Organizers are also in need of sports equipment, art supplies, camera film, tape recorder/CD player, first aid supplies, office supplies and cutlery. Contact Jasmine Dotiwala at (416) 494-1730.

IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL

Fall (Sept) 1999: A Guide to Prayers

Ervad Dr. Kersey H. Antia will be Guest Editor of this issue on Prayers. Articles may be submitted to Dr. Antia at 8318 West 138th Place, Orland Park, IL 60462, Tel: (708) 460-6585. *Submission deadline is July 1*

Winter (Dec) 1999: Social Issues facing Zarathushtis in North America

Maneck Bhujwala will be Guest Editor of this issue on Social Issues. Articles may be submitted to Mr. Bhujwala at 3023 Oldfield Way, San Jose, CA 95135, Tel: (408) 270-9173. *Submission deadline is October 1*

1999 Zarathushti Games

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee of FEZANA is pleased to announce the *6th Zarathushti Games* from July 1 - 4, in Los Angeles. The full package (including 4-day accommodation at California State University, meals, t-shirt and games) is \$170 (after June 26th). Games only is \$65 (after June 26th). Discount is available for early registration. Disco is \$15 (\$20 at door) and cruise is \$50 (\$60 at door). Contact zsc@fezana.org or call 1-888-855-0164.



1999 Congress of International Association for Religious Freedom

The 1999 Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom, will be July 29 - August 3, in Vancouver, BC on "Building an Earth Community." In addition to presentations, study groups and workshops, devotions organized by different faith groups and an interfaith worship service will enable participants to gain deeper understanding. Five study groups will concentrate on major issues: globalization, religious freedom, development and self-help, spirituality and interfaith. A young adult conference (for those 18-35) and a women's conference precede the Congress. Full registration (including coffee breaks and lunches) is \$400 or \$65 per day. Soonoo Engi-

neer invites Zara-thushtis to attend. Contact Soonoo at (604) 324-9365.

North American Youth Congress in Montreal

[Also see *Youthfully Speak*

ing, in this issue]. "Turning Belief into Action" is the theme of the 8th North American Youth Congress to be held at McGill University in Montreal, August 12-15, 1999. Mehernosh Mody, Mazda Antia, Rustom Appoo and Arianne Teherani of ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America) have put out a call for volunteers. For information contact Mehernosh at (617) 928-0953, email: mmody@media.mit.edu.

1999 Avesta Conference, Calgary



The 2nd International Avesta Conference will be held September 24-26, at the Ramada Hotel in Calgary, Alberta. Co-

sponsored by the Zoroastrian Education and Research Society, FEZANA and the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta, the aim of this unique conference is to promote knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Zoroastrianism from the Gathas, Younger Avesta, Pahlavi and Parsi/Zoroastrian literature, rituals and traditions as they evolved in the last 3,000 years. World-renowned scholars from India, Israel, Japan, Russia, USA, UK, Germany and Italy will be presenting papers. Contact Firdosh Mehta at (780) 438-4371, FMehta@RNG.com

Pluralism Project Symposium

A symposium on Civil Society in Multireligious America, sponsored by The Pluralism Project, will be held at Harvard University in Cambridge, on November 18-20, just preceding the

annual meeting of the American Academy of Religions in Boston. Interested persons please contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383, who represents Zarathushtis on the Pluralism Project Advisory Board.

Zarathushti Business Conference in Toronto

The 1999 Zarathushti Business Conference will be held in Toronto on October 9-10, at the Toronto Airport Ramada hotel. All Zarathushti business persons and entrepreneurs as well as those contemplating business are invited. For information, contact Kobad Zarolia at (905) 542-9885.

Parliament of World Religions, South Africa

Capetown, South Africa is the venue for the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions, from December 1-8. A tour for Zarathushti participants is being planned prior to the Parliament. Registration for the Parliament, organized by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, is \$350 (individual) or \$300 per person (family/group). Contact Rohinton Rivetna at (630) 325-5383. ■

Thank you!

FEZANA Journal thanks Mehrdad Khosraviani for serving as Subscriptions Manager for the Journal for several years, during which time he streamlined our subscription database and address labeling system and set up ways of collecting subscription revenues. We now have an interactive subscription form on the web (at www.fezana.org) due to his (and our webmaster Rita Kapadia's) efforts. He is now transferring his responsibilities to FEZANA treasurer Rustom Kevala but will remain on the team as a consultant. We thank him for sharing his expertise and his overall contributions to the Zarathushti community in North America.

It's fast approaching ...



SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS

Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 - January 1, 2001



HIGHLIGHTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- Opening and Closing Ceremonies
- The Seventh Zarathushti Games, a two-day sport event, on December 26 and 27, 2000
- Showcase our Zarathushti heritage and culture
- Millenium Ball on December 31
- Outstanding Zarathushti Awards
- Spectacular Legacy/Special Projects
- Unity Quilt/Commemorative Book/Zarathushti Orchestra and more
- Display of arts, books, and film festival

PROGRAM: FIVE DAILY THEMES

- Welcoming The Zarathushti from around the world
- The Zarathushti first and second millennia
- Anchoring religion in a Zarathushti life
- Preparing for the third millennium
- Passing the torch

TOUR HOUSTON

- NASA/Galveston
- Pre and post conference tours to Dallas/Austin/San Antonio

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Dolly Dastoor, co-chair:

dastoor@total.net

Homi Davier, co-chair:

Davier5@aol.com

FEZANA website:

<http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000>

FUNDRAISING

- Become a corporate or individual donor
- Advertise your business
- Sponsor an event
- Contact: Yasmin Ghadiali: ghad@aol.com

The conference will be held at J. W. Marriott located in the prestigious Galleria district. Rooms are \$79 + tax for quad occupancy per night. Early registration available. Contact Rustom Engineer for early registration: RustomE@aol.com



WZC 2000 CONGRESS CALLS

SEVENTH WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS Houston, Texas, December 28, 2000 to January 1, 2001 <http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000>

Projecting an Odyssey. A successful congress depends on the energy and momentum of its participants and the commitment and vision of its volunteers. WZC 2000 is planning lectures, presentations, cultural events, exhibits, awards and entertainment. We welcome ideas for events and projects and look forward to your contribution, too!

Our Mission is to learn about our religion, heritage and culture, and to celebrate together as we launch our Zarathushti odyssey into the new millennium.

WZC 2000 Program. Each of the five days will emphasize a different programmatic theme. The first day will welcome the Zarathushti world through opening ceremonies, unveiling of exhibits and legacy projects, international exchange, and a Zarathushti meets Zarathushti musical extravaganza. The second day will focus on the Zarathushti-first and second millennia by celebrating art, archaeology, music, culture, history, and the achievements of Zarathushti women. The third day aims to anchor religion in a Zarathushti's life and will highlight how Zarathushtis live in contemporary society. Preparing for the third millennium on the fourth day forecasts the next 100 years. Through networking sessions, this day will encourage mobilization of professional and particular interest groups. The last day, Passing the Torch, symbolically launches the Odyssey with a jashan by young priests.

Legacy and Special Projects. A legacy project is a gift that we, Zarathushtis from around the world, offer ourselves to commemorate our past and express our optimism for the future. Please submit your proposal to Farrokh Mistree farrokhmistree@me.gatech.edu. A form is also available on the Fezana web site. Projects include: *Unity Quilt* composed of logos of Zarathushti organizations around the world (Khurshid Bamboat); *Millennium Time Capsule* will include 20th century artifacts to be buried at the Houston Heritage and Cultural Center (Firdosh Mehta); *Greeting Cards* designed by Homi Meherhomji; *World Zarathushti Orchestra* will gather Zarathushti musicians from around the world to perform at the Congress (Cyrus Mehta and Piroozi Cooper); *Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce* to promote Zarathushti business worldwide (Homi Davier); *A Zarathushti's Guide to the Gathas* a layman's text to understanding the Gathas (Khojeste Mistree and Farrokh Mistree); *Zoroastrianism – Its Religion, History, and Culture*, a two-volume collection that treats the history, culture, doctrine and ritual from 28 eminent Iranists (Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey-Mistree); *Biographical docu-drama* on prominent Zarathushtis (Jimmy Kumana); *Zarathushti Field Service* proposes to sponsor 30 youth from India, Pakistan, and Iran to attend the congress free of charge (Purvez Rustomji); *World Zarathushti Awards* for distinguished Zarathushtis (Dinshaw Joshi).

A Forum for Women. Dolly Dastoor is asking Zarathushti women if they would sponsor three activities at the congress: a workshop on Zarathushti women in the third millennium, a special lunch to honor twelve distinguished Zarathushti women, and commemorating these Zarathushti women in a special calendar to mark the first year of the new millennium. All three activities require participation and financial support. If interested, contact Dolly at dastoor@total.net.

World Zarathushti Games. As an integral part of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, a two-day sports event, will be held on December 26 and 27, 2000. Contestants from around the world are invited to enter the competitions and meet fellow Zarathushtis in a friendly test of athletic skills. The competition will feature: basketball, table tennis, volleyball, swimming and track and field events. All Zarathushtis are invited to participate as spectators or to cheer the contestants. Check with Rustom Khoshnavian for details at rkhoshnavian@simsci.com.

Fund Raising. Chair Yasmin Ghadiali has sent out letters soliciting financial support. Her strategy encourages different levels of patronage: corporate, individual and business. We hope you are inspired to give all you can.

Visit the FEZANA web page (by webmaster Rita Kapadia) for the latest on Congress 2000.
<http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000>.



YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING

THE MOUTHPIECE OF A GENERATION...

"THE STAFF OF YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ISSUES. WE LOOK TO THE YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPLY US WITH THEIR THOUGHTS ON OUR RELIGION AND COMMUNITY. ALL TOO OFTEN WE FORSAKE OUR RIGHT TO BE HEARD. TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LET OTHERS KNOW WHAT IT IS ON YOUR MIND. USE THIS JOURNAL AS A TOOL FOR ACTION. WRITE TO US...WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM Y'ALL!"

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PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES, PICTURES, STORIES, ETC. TO ANY ONE OF THE EDITORS OR DIRECTLY TO AARON RUSTOM.

"Youth Talk"

By: Nikan Khatibi

"In every issue of the FEZANA Journal, in the Youthfully Speaking section, a question will be asked to the Zarathushti youth. The question will concern topics and issues in our community."

What characteristics define a good Zarathushti?

I believe what makes a good Zarathushti is one who follows the three principals of Good Words, Thoughts, and Deeds. A good Zarathushti is one who is afraid of God and thus does not create evil. Truly a person is considered a better Zarathushti if those around him are thankful for his charitable deeds. And above all, a good Zarathushti is one who has the blessings of their parents.

*Mahin Bozorgmehr
Augusta, Maine*

In my opinion, a good Zarathushti is someone who does what is good and right because it is good and right and for no other reason than that. It is someone who in his / her life, is out making a difference in the world by making it a better place to live and helping bring about the renewal of the world. It is someone who is truthful, trustworthy, and someone who thinks about the consequences. A good Zarathushti must also have a component of selfless service – serving humanity and all of creation because it is the right thing to do.

*Jasmine Patel
Baltimore, Maryland*

A good Zarathushti, in my belief, is one who not only knows the prayers, but also knows what they mean. He / she believes in the ideals and actions encouraged in the prayers and uses them to thank God and praise him, not just receive assistance in hardship. A true Zarathushti knows what the religion is about and is proud of it. He / she believes in the preaching of Asho Zarathustra and acts on them.

*Vishtasp Soroushian
San Diego, California*

"Youth Talk" continued...

Many distinctive attributes make a good Zarathushti. In my opinion, the attainment of wellness contributes to making a good Zarathushti. By following the policy of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, wellness can be achieved. A pure mind, clean speech, and charitable work are all just the stepping stones in the making of a good Zarathushti.

Urvaksh Patel
Chicago, Illinois

Simply acknowledging and passively following the tenets of the Zarathushti faith is not enough. One must actively pursue good through means such as charity and good will towards others. Furthermore, following the path of Asha by being truthful to yourself and others is the key to living a good Zarathushti life.

Diana Engineer
Houston, Texas

The question for the next issue ... "Where do you see the Zarathushti religion in the 21st Century?" Please e-mail your responses to Nikan Khatibi at: Nikan2@aol.com

LET FURY BE SUPPRESSED! PUT DOWN
VIOLENCE,

YOU WHO WOULD ENSURE
YOURSELVES, THROUGH
RIGHTEOUSNESS,

THE REWARD OF THE GOOD MIND,
WHOSE COMPANION IS THE HOLY
MAN.

HE SHALL HAVE HIS ABODE IN THY
HOUSE, O LORD!

YASNA, 48 / 7

RECESS and A Gun

By: Aaron Rutten

I sat there watching in amazement and horror! "We interrupt this program for breaking, live, news coverage of events unfolding at Columbine High in Littleton,

Colorado! We will return you back to the Jerry Springer Show shortly after this visual relay of even more graphic violence." (This will be great for ratings!)

Thirteen DEAD... And the two who did it..? Dead too. Do I feel sorry for the 2 gunmen? If so, why and how? Sorry for their families...that I am.

How can this be in this day and age, adolescent genocide moving rampant in the hallowed institutions of learning and progress? Replacing the ABC's with TNT! The only math they're learning is about the .38 and .9mm with multiplication from the single to the double gauge. The 3Rs are now run, retreat, and reload!!!

The history of the madman has replaced world history? Oh wait a minute...it's the same thing. India's got the bomb...Pakistan's got the bomb...and here in our town, don't disrespect me 'cuz I'm da' bomb!!!

"Where were you when that school got shot up?"

"Which school are you referring to? The one in Kentucky, Colorado, Alberta, or Georgia?" I'd say. Alas, I'll take violence in North America for \$200.00 please...

"My fellow Senators, we need to put prayer back in our schools!"

"Dear God, please allow me the skill and patience to have good aim and kill without conscience, maim without prejudice, and destroy people with utter disregard for the human life...Amen"

ZYNA & ZSSMU Present
8th North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress
"Turning Belief into Action"
Mc Gill University - Montreal, Quebec
August 12- 15, 1999

Congress Information

On behalf of Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA) and the Zoroastrian Student Society of Mc Gill University (ZSSMU), we would like to invite you to the Eight North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress, *Turning Belief Into Action*. **Accommodations:** All participants will be in single rooms, at the Bishop Mountain Dormitory, on the campus of Mc Gill University. **Congress age limit.** All youth between the ages of 14 and 35 years of age are welcome to attend. there will be a curfew placed on participants less than 18 years of age. You must include a copy of your drivers license, identification, or birth certificate indicating your name and date of birth. **Schedule:** Congress registration will begin August 12, 1999 at 12 p.m. The opening session of the congress will begin at 6 p.m. on August 12. The congress will end August 15, 1999 at 2 p.m. **Call for group leaders:** If you are interested in being a group leader for the congress (leading small groups during breakout sessions) please contact Mazda Antia at (m-antia@nwu.edu).

Important: We are planning a unique program that emphasizes action, small group learning, and interactive workshops **rather** than the usual lecture style format. Thus, participation in all sessions is **MANDATORY**. There will be plenty of time after 4 p.m. of all the congress days for social activities. If you are not interested in participating in the educational aspects of the congress, attending the congress is not recommended.

Upon receipt of registration, you will receive a detailed schedule of each day's activities.

Registration

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Emergency contact name and phone number: _____

DOB: _____ Occupation: _____

(If you are a student, indicate your area of study)

- ☐ Vegetarian
☐ Non-Vegetarian

Fees

Checks must be made out to "ZYNA." Checks must be mailed to *Mehernosh Mody, 46 Spiers Rd. Newton, MA 02159*. The registration fees for the congress are as follows:

- ☐ \$225 US/ \$310 CA (Before June 30, 1999)
☐ \$255 US/ \$350 CA (After July 1, 1999 through July 31, 1999)

Registrations received after June 30, 1999 will be accepted subject to availability. The cost of the congress includes all sessions and materials, all meals from Thursday evening until Sunday afternoon, all evening entertainment, and accommodations at Bishop Mountain for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

Waiver

- You must be between the ages of 14-35 as of Aug. 11th 1999. To be eligible to attend.
- ANY and ALL mishaps and/or accidents which lead to bodily harm and/or damage to third party property or to third person body and/or property are the sole responsibilities of those involved. ZYNA/FEZANA will not be responsible for said person's actions or third party actions.
- Registrant is liable for all charges incurred by ZYNA should check be returned due to a lack of funds or any other banking fees associated with transaction.
- Individual is responsible for making sure that immigration status entitles them to travel abroad.
- ZYNA reserves the right to make and/or change rooming assignments.
- Transportation to and from certain sites has been arranged. However, we do not claim any responsibility for the person(s) not being present on given departure date, time, and location.
- Please make sure that you are properly covered for any medical costs that might be incurred as a result of accident. ZYNA or FEZANA cannot take any responsibility for any harm that may occur during the trip.
- It is recommended that you make plans to fly in the day before, so as to account for any delays or mishaps.
- All registrants must include a Photocopy of an ID giving their name and birth date.
- Your signature below consenting to the verbiage above is required. If you do not sign, your registration application with your payment will be returned back to you.

Signature of Registrant _____

Signature of Guardian (if under 18) _____

Host Accommodations

1. Will you be staying with a host family after the congress in Montreal?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

a. If yes, could you please list below the last name of the host family you will be staying with?

b. If not, do you need to be put up with a host family after the congress?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

- If yes, how many people in your party (list names please)?

• Till what date will you be staying in Montreal?

Youth Directory

If you do not want your name, mailing address, phone number and email address printed in the zoroastrian youth directory, please check the following box

- ☐ Do not include my contact information in the zoroastrian youth directory

Contact Information

If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of the congress co-chairs (please not phone calls after 10 p.m. local time).

Mazda Antia
310-395-0464
m-antia@nwu.edu

Mehernosh Mody
617-928-0953
mmody@media.mit.edu

Arianne Teherani
562-928-5544
teherani@usc.edu

All portions of this registration form must be completed and returned. Without a copy of documentation indicating date of birth, signatures on the waiver form, and emergency contact information, your registration packet cannot be processed. To avoid any delay and the possibility of losing your spot, do not leave any information on this document incomplete.

A Celebration of Zarathushti Music & Musicians

Compiled by Roshan Rivetna

From Zarathushti liturgical music going back to 2500 BC, to Persian folk music we explore the Zarathushti musical tradition and celebrate the contributions of Zarathushti musicians on the Indian, Iranian and Western classical and pop music scene.

The Sounds

Contemporary Zarathushti ritual worship however it does not have singing and it ever exist? If so, what did it sound

By Raiomand Mirza
London, United Kingdom

THE MYSTERY

This is the story of a mystery, a detective hunt, seeking to answer a perplexing question. My Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology at The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at University of London is entitled Zoroastrian Liturgical Music and will be a combination of historical research and original musical composition. The historical span of this research reaches back to 2500 BC and comes right up to 1999. The origins of my own journey go back to the summer of 1995.

As an undergraduate Music/Communications Studies student in Montreal at Concordia University, I was exploring my new found love of the religious European music of the Renaissance. I was fascinated by the sublime and exalting way in which Franco-Flemish polyphony took sacred words and made them into holy sounds that filled the heart and directed the mind towards God. I was especially struck by the way in which Latin was revealed as a language so perfectly suited to be set to music.

At the same time I began to rediscover a place in my life for our own Zarathushti prayers. I had begun after many years to pray every day

and as I listened to the sounds and textures of the words, I became aware that the languages of our own prayers were indeed beautiful and fluid and were well suited to be set to music. I also realized that I had never in all my life actually heard the prayers sung as music. In fact, while thinking of what it must have been like in a 16th century French church on a Sunday to listen to a Mass set by Josquin Desprez, I was acutely aware that as a Zarathushti, I had never walked into a jashan and heard our prayers as a music.

This is the heart of my research: Zoroastrianism has no known liturgical musical tradition. It is important to emphasize that this question is focussed only on the use of music in performing the liturgy, not on any material performed outside this context. There are, of course, examples of some folk material and of songs of a religious nature but these are not within the structure of ritual worship.

Upon reflection, it becomes odder and odder, and ultimately remains unexplained and unjustifiable. An initial line of thought is that there surely must be other religions who also do not have music in worship. Surely this is such a culturally specific issue that not everyone needs to do the same things. Well, research reveals that every single religion or Shamanistic faith in the world uses music in worship. It is true that

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or FEZANA Journal. Per its Editorial Policy, FEZANA Journal neither endorses nor espouses any specific perspective.

of Ancient Faith

can be said to contain recited and melodicised speech, no use of instruments. If there isn't any music now, did like, and lastly, what happened to it?

within certain large religions there are sects who have strong prescriptions against music in worship, e.g. Calvinistic Christians, Shia Moslems, but the religions as a whole (Christianity, Islam) have strong thriving traditions of liturgical music. The conclusion of this exploration is that music in worship is a human tendency. It is easier to find a religion without God than without music. Atheism is without God. There is not, however, an entire religion without music.

More than once an irate fellow Zarathushti has piped up defensively arguing that surely the priests are chanting or semi-chanting and if you listen carefully it's sort of musical, isn't it? This could lead to an unresolvable discussion of what is and is not considered music. As a composer, virtually all sounds are musical material to me and as an ethnomusicologist I believe that each culture has a right to define for itself what is and is not music. However, ultimately it is important to organize information in a way that allows an objective understanding of it. Therefore, for the purposes of my thesis,

music in worship has been defined using the sliding scale [see figure below] which represents the opposing ways in which sacred text can be performed in worship.

All other religions have traditions which can be classified under each of the above headings. They contain everything from speech to music. By contrast contemporary Zarathushti ritual worship can be said to contain recited speech as well as slightly melodicised but unornamental speech, however it does not have clear, unambiguous singing and certainly has no use of instruments.

This brings me to the mystery. If there isn't any music now, did it ever exist? If so, what did it sound like, and lastly, what happened to it?

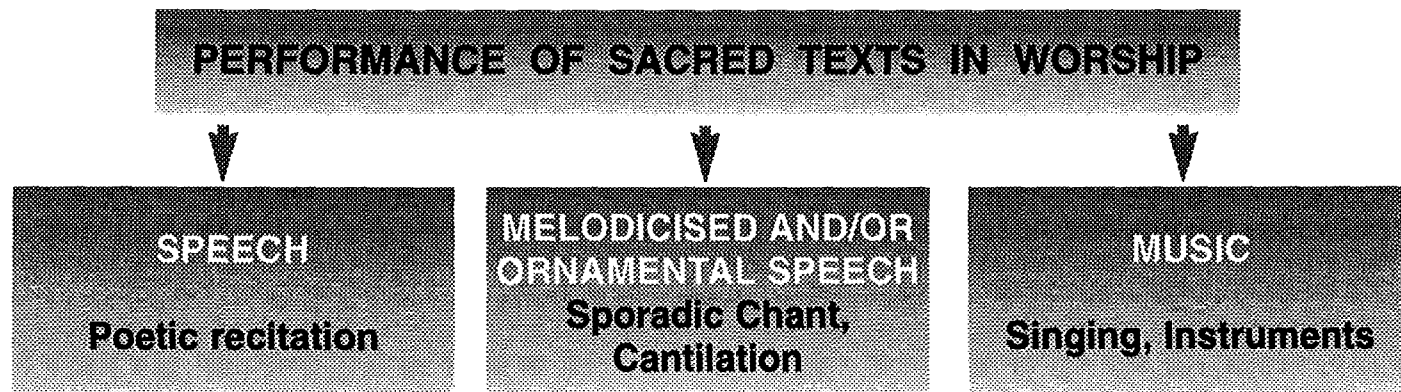
THE THEORY

My research has thus far yielded a few possibilities. The simple answer is that nobody has ever written about Zarathushti liturgical music. After a year of reading 'canonical' works on Zoroastrianism, I now know considerably more about our history but have yet to read a substantiated account of our sacred music. I have come across numerous passing refer-

ences and any number of red herrings but nothing solid and convincing.

One conclusion is that nothing has been written because there is nothing to write about. However, my research has also revealed a number of compelling clues that indicate that something did exist. First, within our sacred text itself, as is commonly known, the word Gatha means hymn. It is not likely that somehow 3,500 years ago the word hymn meant recitation as opposed to singing.

Furthermore, music in worship was common with the preceding and subsequent cultures of the Persian empire as well as the surrounding contemporary cultures. Richard Dumbrill's *Musicology and Organology of the Ancient Near East* contains tablets which are notations of Hurrian hymns from 2,500 BC. Music in worship was common in cults that were offshoots of Zoroastrianism – Cult of Anahita, Manicheism and Mithraism. In the latter periods of the Persian empire, music was a prominent feature at the highest levels of Sasanian society. How possible or likely is it for a society to have thriving secular music and absolutely no religious music at all?



When all the musical information about Persian antiquity is assembled, the outline of a one thousand year long hole emerges, stretching from 580 BCE to 636 CE. What we are left with is a sort of "What happened to the dinosaurs?" question. While it can be easily asserted that all written material could have been destroyed by conquering invaders, the disappearance of the practice itself is more difficult to explain. Our prayers and traditions have been preserved by oral tradition, so why not their original form? The answer to this would probably be in the form of a sociological conjecture as opposed to hard provable evidence.

Ultimately, to remain credible, one cannot write about what is not there. However, information and connections can give us the shape of what is missing. In short, because Zarathushti works have not yielded any conclusive data, my search has expanded to related cultures. It is possible that the historical hole can be mapped by connecting and crisscrossing information across its surface. It is possible that a musical vocabulary of the past could be stretched over and borrowed from other cultures that were incorporated into the fabric of the Zarathushti empires.

It is my theory that the prayers we hear recited today were once sung. However there is currently no solid archaeological evidence to support this. There has consequently been a shift in the focus and nature of my project. Whereas I originally intended to find "the missing music", the goal of my research now is to construct a Zarathushti liturgical music history and vocabulary and make connections between the past and present. The article thus far has focussed on the past. The next stage of work will venture into the present and will involve field research.

I will be traveling to Iran and India to record performances of our prayers and then analyze them musically. I will construct a 20th century vocabulary of sound in prayer – tonal tendencies, rhythmic structures, performance practices, relations between the text and its exposition. Simply put, I will listen to dasturs from all over and will see what resid-

“ It is my theory that the prayers we hear recited today were once sung. In my field research I will travel to Iran and India to record performances of our prayers and analyze them musically ... My ambition is to assemble a comprehensive work on Zoroastrian music in worship and to write my own musical settings for portions of the liturgy. ”

ual elements of an ancient musical practice may still be present.

Using archival material, I will try to tease out the evolution/preservation of prayer styles in this century and will try to note how styles have diffused geographically because of migration and other reasons. I will also start an audio-visual archive of our prayer practices as they are now. This is a gift we could leave for future generations. Imagine how much richer our history would be if we had a solid record of how our prayers were performed in the last millennium or even a thousand years before that?

In the end, it is my ambition to assemble a comprehensive work on Zarathushti music in worship and to write my own musical settings for some portions of the liturgy. I end with a thought that came to me about the nature of our prayers. We believe in the power of their sound. Indeed in a jashan the text does not pass cogni-

tively through our brains in words we understand. The connective tissue between us and our prayers is their sound and yet we know so very little about the production of this sound.

Our dasturs are taught to pronounce and enunciate and to memorize and pray with a full heart. They are not taught melody, rhythm, harmony or any kind of formalized voice control.

They are not, in essence, taught to fill holy words with holy sounds and it seems logical that they once were. The exploration of that possibility stretches over four and a half thousand years.

It is impossible to compress two years research of that jour-

ney into a few paragraphs but I hope that this introduction to my project has been stimulating and I invite responses from readers.

[The author would like to thank his wife, family in Montreal and friends dominic and Siobahn for their editorial help in all his Ph.D. writings including this article].

Raiomand Mirza is working on his Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, focusing on Liturgical Music of Ancient Persia, at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. He has a B.A. (with Distinction) from Concordia University in Montreal, with a major in Western Classical Music, specializing in Communication Studies. Mirza has composed original music and recorded for a number of BBC TV and Radio productions in UK, and for theater, film, videos and CDs in Canada.

If we open a quarrel between the past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future.

- Sir Winston Churchill [from BPP Review]

Music and the Zoroastrian Cultural Identity

By Hormuz Minina
Atlanta, Georgia

Creating a cultural identity. Today the diaspora of Zarathushtis across the world threatens our very existence, by creating communities in distant lands which are physically detached from the traditional centers of Zarathushtis. This is especially true for the second generation which will have to attend school and grow up not knowing many Zarathushtis. By personal experience, having attended Engineering school in Atlanta, I know first hand the spiritual isolation one can feel in such a situation.

Some might say that the world is growing smaller with all the advances of the information age; it is, however, foolish to think that this telecommunication revolution will cancel the adverse effects of the geographic isolation of Zarathushtis. So what does a Zarathushti in America, or New Zealand or Australia or from any of the other parts of the world do, to feel a part of the Zarathushti community.

The answer may lie in the creation of a Zarathushti cultural identity, a goal that I am convinced, is attainable. A precedent can be drawn from the exodus of the Jews to Israel after the end of World War II, when thousands of Jews converged on the newly created nation. From across the Western hemisphere they brought with them great cultural differences and a lot to disagree upon, however there was a concerted effort by the leaders of the new state to create a unifying identity, and part of this was accom-

plished by the revival of Hebrew and Jewish arts in Israel.

Drawing from this experience, we can learn that creating a cultural identity within the Zarathushti religion may also allow us to transcend the issues that divide us. I have given this matter much thought and feel that a concerted effort must be made by every Zarathushti to find common ground if our religion is to survive into the future. My contribution to this effort comes from my love of the arts and traditional forms of music.

Music in the Zoroastrian religion. The very foundation of our religion, the Gathas, have their roots in music.

“The very foundation of our religion, the Gathas, have their roots in music. However, the art of singing the Gathas to music is lost ...”

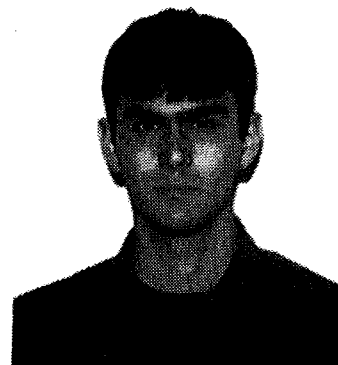
However, the art of singing the Gathas to music was lost, probably with the attempts to wipe out the culture and thus the religion of the Persian people, first by Alexander and then by the Arabs.

I have been researching the arts in the Zarathushti tradition. My intention is to produce a 3-part record entitled “*Anthology of Cultural and Religious Zoroastrian Music*” which would highlight the contemporary Zarathushti arts in Iranian region along with Parsi folk traditions. The emphasis of the collection would be on the revival of the musical tradition of the Gathas. This would be a most ambitious project, employing ethnomusicologists to brush away the years of non-Zarathushti musical tradition from contemporary Persian and Parsi music until the least common denominator is discovered.

As a start, I am collecting examples of Zarathushti devotional and religious music. As I begin my research, many questions come to mind, such as does music have a place within the Zarathushti religion as part of the congregational devotion? The

paucity of Zarathushti devotional music may be due to the fact that the religion does not have a tradition of congregational worship, and attaches no significance to the power of the congregation over that of the individual. Christianity for example, supports the idea of the power behind spiritual congregation, and consequently has a long history of religious music which allows itself to be molded to suit the various cultures that adopt that religion. The same applies to the Gawali music of the Sufis or the Bhajans of the Hindus or any other chant music, which in most cases praises/appeals to a higher power with the use of set musical structures created for them. Do Zarathushtis have prayers sung to traditional Persian music?

I am compelled to embark on this venture, driven by the hope that it will provide a means of highlighting the strong historical connection of our religion with the arts, thereby contributing to the creation of a cultural identity common to all Zarathushtis, and to the perpetuation forever, of our Good Religion. ■



Hormuz Minina's educational background is in Electrical Engineering. He worked as a music director for a large non-commercial station in Atlanta for over 4 years. During this time he created his own record label for the advancement of artistic expression through music. Presently he is working on a mixed media installation to open in Atlanta in July 1999. Hormuz plans to attend the World Congress 2000 to present details of his Anthology. He can be contacted at dsrekhm@prism.gatech.edu.

Persian Music and Musical Instruments

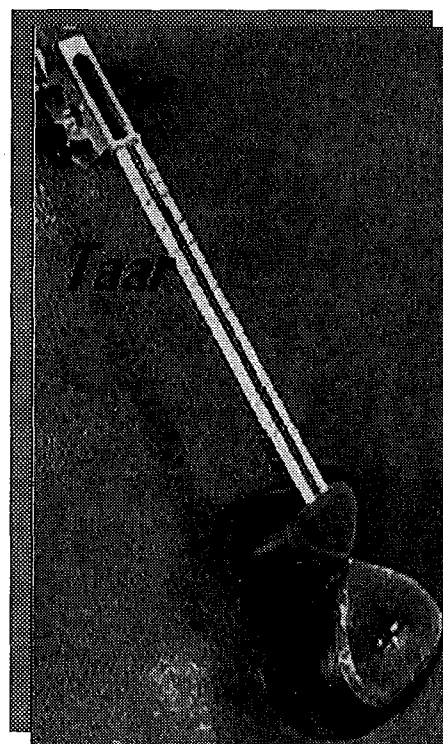
By Ahmad Borhani
Baltimore, Maryland

Over the course of its exceptionally long history, Persian music evolved in diverse and complex ways. One of the most important musical trends developed in conjunction with Persian (Farsi) poetry. An understanding of poetry is crucial to the mastery of Persian music, both in composition and improvisation. Iran shares this aspect of its musical heritage with ancient Greece, where music and poetry were also intimately associated in a symbiotic relationship. 'Musica', the latin word for music, refers to the classic combination form of poetry and music.

Theory. Persian classical music consists of many different elements derived from various regions of Iran. Some distinguishing characteristics of Persian classical music include: the importance of melody; fine detail in ornamentation and enhancing of the melodic line; sophisticated rhythms that are constantly changing; and the maintenance of balance between interpretation, ornamentation and the melodic line.

Persian classical music is based on the 'radif' system: a collection of 'dastgahs' (modes) and 'gusheha' (melodic types) which each musician can alter and interpret while staying within the general structure of the radif. There are 12 dastgahs in Per-

[1] S. P. Godrej, "Ancient Iranian Culture and Its Influence", *Informal Religious Meetings*, 1998.



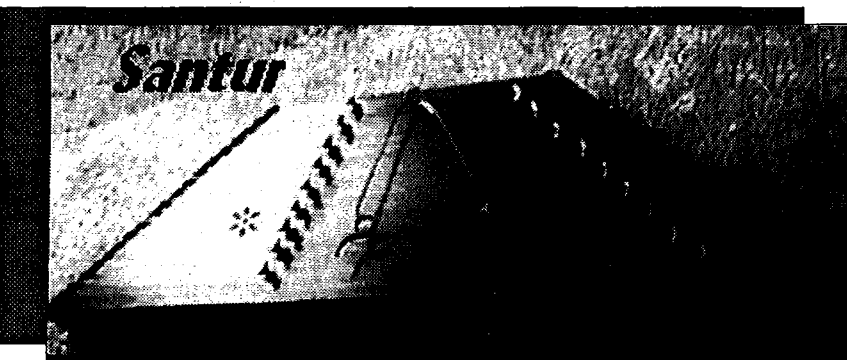
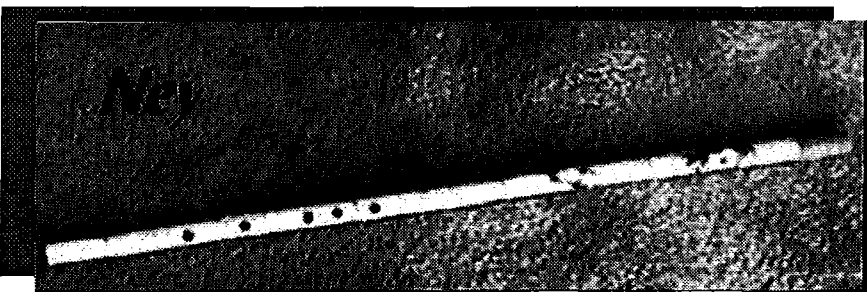
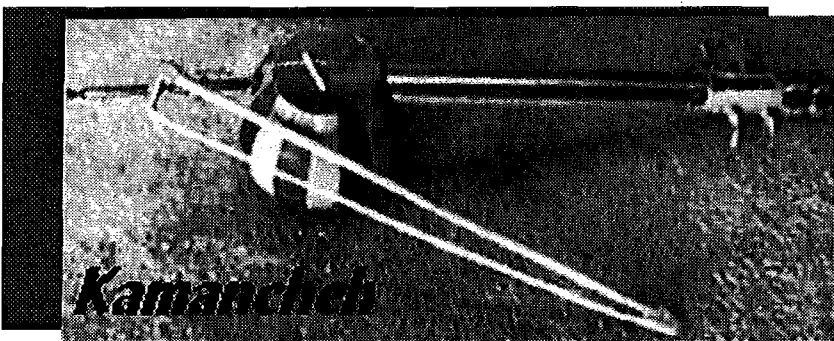
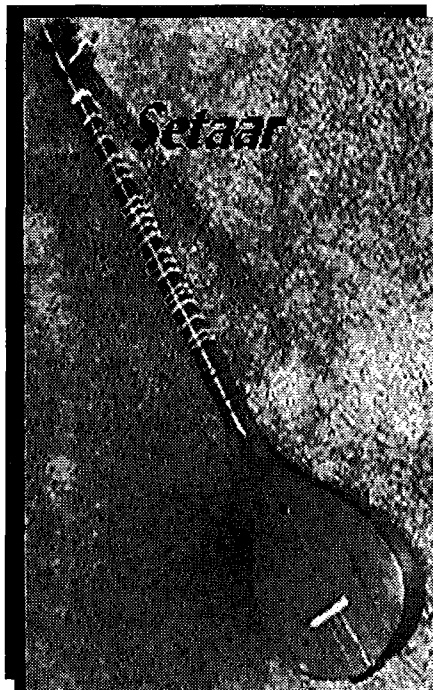
PHOTOS: AHMAD BORHANI, PERSIAN NATIONAL MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Traditional Persian Classical & Folk Music

Music played a significant role in Sasanian court life. On mosaics, drinking bowls and in a rock-relief at Taq-i-Bustan, the musicians are women, and harps, trombones and tambourines were favorite instruments. So were the mandolin and the flute. On a silver bowl (6th century CE) a woman is shown playing a bagpipe, possibly a Roman importation [1]. In the Pahlavi period (1925-1979) troupes of singers carrying torchlights would move through the provinces of Iran, singing songs to herald NoRuz. Today, traditional Persian classical and folk music is central to Iranian ceremonies and celebrations.

sian classical music, each derived from a unique collection of intervals, including half-tones, three-quarter tones, whole tones and quarter tones. The mood evoked by the music is greatly dependent on the dastgah chosen, but different musicians are capable of deriving different moods from the same dastgah. Certainly not

a solo art form, the emphasis in Persian music, is on 'ham navazi' (playing together). While each instrument is heard solo at least once in a traditional program, concerts most prominently feature ensemble playing, and are designed to showcase the musician in both roles – as a group and solo player.



Persian music affects listeners in a deep and spiritual way. The joint goal of a concert is for the performers and the audience to reach a state of pure emotion, a meditative state or 'hal'. It is the duty and joy of the musician to plunge into this hal with the audience.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

The **oud**, known as the lute in other cultures, is the most fundamental instrument in Persian music theory. It is fretless, has 12 strings made of brass and nylon and is played with a 5" pick.

The **taar** is a member of the lute family, with a soundtable made of the delicate membranes of a lamb fetus. It is carved from a block of mulberry wood and has a deep curved body with two bulges and a long neck with a fingerboard covered with bone. The six strings are strummed with a brass pick coated in wax.

The **setaar** and the **taar** are the oldest instruments in traditional Persian music. Each can accommodate the entire range of Iranian music. With a small pear-shaped body of mulberry wood, a long neck and four metal string, it is similar to the **tar** in its number of frets and tuning system. It is unique in the way it is played: complex rhythms and embellishments are created by using only the index finger of the right hand in an oscillating motion.

The **Tonback** is a goblet drum carved from a single block of wood. It forms the main percussion instrument of a traditional Persian ensemble. It is held under the arm or on the leg. The top is covered with a membrane of goat or sheepskin and is played with all ten fingers. It thus presents the player with rich rhythmic possibilities.

The **kamancheh** is the only bowed stringed instrument in traditional Persian music. A spike fiddle with a long rounded neck and a spherical body, the instrument is carved from a single block of wood. The circular soundtable is made of fish skin, or

animal skin of the bladder. The instrument, which originally had 3 silk strings, now has four metal strings. The player rests the kamancheh on the knee and turns the instrument

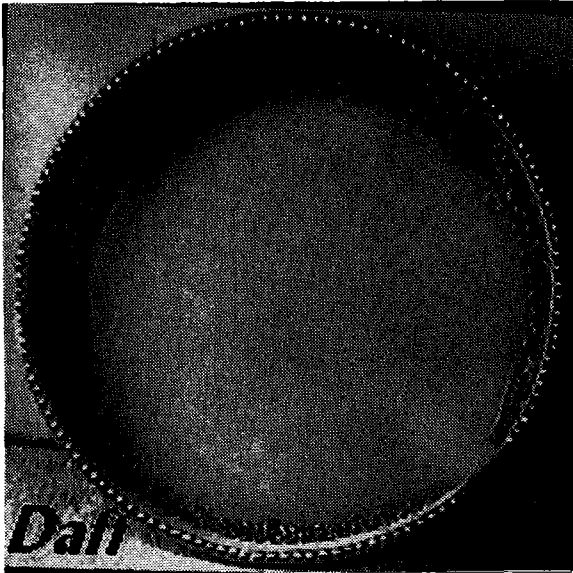
against the bow rather than moving the bow across the strings. The bow hair is tightened by placing the fingers between the wood and the horsehair.

The **ney** is the only wind instrument in traditional Persian music and is used in both religious ceremonies as well as music ensembles. It is a reed pipe open on both ends with five (plus 1) holes, played by holding the blowing end between the middle teeth (a style of playing unique to Iran).

The **santur**, a trapezoidal box made of walnut, closely resembles instruments found in India, the Far East and Eastern Europe. It is played by striking the strings with two very light

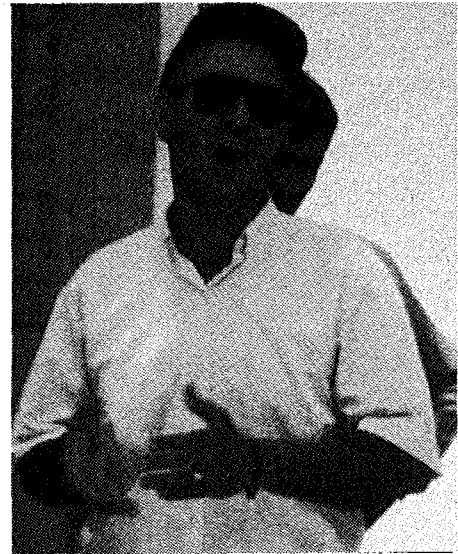
hammers (*mezrab*) of hardwood held in three fingers of each hand. Some performers place a piece of cloth over the strings to soften the sound.

The **daff** is a frame drum with a row of small metal hoops fastened on the inside that rattle when the membrane of the drum is struck. A larger version is used in the mystical ceremonies of the Sufis of Iran, Turkey and the Arab world.



Composer and conductor **Ahmad Borhani** established the 7-member Baltimore-based **Persian National Music Ensemble** in 1985, which performs traditional Persian music concerts nationally for functions, universities, organizations and charities. With a 30-year background in professional music instruction, they also offer music classes. Visit their website at <http://members.home.net/pnemusic> or call (410) 866-0127.

Dariush Yazeshni Singer of Yazd



I first met 'Dariush BBC', as he is playfully called by the local Zarathushtis of Yazd, when he greeted our tour bus at the Atash Kadeh in Yazd. Without any hesitation, he stood on the sidewalk, and in a booming voice that soon drew a crowd around him, burst into a joyful, welcome song in Dari.

Thenceforth, Dariush, who hails from a mobed family, accompanied us off and on, on the tour bus, regaling us with his repertoire of traditional Persian songs. At Pir Sab, a shrine high amidst the desert mountains, Dariush was the star of the evening. Until the wee hours of the morning he sang his heart out, accompanying himself on the 'daff' (a Persian tambourine), while revelers danced and joined in song around him, his powerful voice reverberating across the terraces of the rugged mountainside shrine.

The songs Dariush sings, he picked up as a young boy from his family and friends. There are no songbooks, no tapes, no recordings (though I am told that Firoza and Khojeste Mistree have recorded his songs on tape) – they are, for the most part, passed down from generation to generation.

But for Dariush BBC, we may have come perilously close to losing them forever.

- By Roshan Rivetna

The late Ardeshir Bazadeh Great Zarathushti Daff and Tonback Player

Ardeshir Bazadeh was possibly the greatest Zarathushti 'daff' and 'tonback' (Persian drums) player of Iran. No doubt, he was a master in this field and had won many awards.

The daff, also known as the 'are-booneh' is one of the oldest Iranian musical instruments. It is the traditional Zarathushti instrument used in celebrations and ceremonies. It is also very popular amongst our Kurdish people.

A professional teacher, Mr. Bazadeh lived in Khoramshah, one of the oldest Zarathushti sections of Yazd.

Teaching Zarathushtis to play these traditional Persian instruments was his last attempt and hope to pass on the tradition to the next generation. "After me, my class will spread my spirit," he said, "That is why I have to work with them, even with pain and sorrow." He died last year, of cancer at age 67, but has left his legacy to his many students who will carry on the tradition; among them his five nieces, all of whom play the daff and tonback.

Fereydoon Dehmehri
Vancouver, British Columbia
Daryoush Mehrshahi
Sheffield, UK



Choir of Zarathushti students, left, singing the *Ashem Vohu Song* at the 6th World Zoroastrian Congress in Tehran. The beautiful song, shown below in English and Farsi script, along with a translation in English by Firoozeh Ardeshiri, is a popular selection for Zarathushti festive occasions.

The Ashem Vohu Song

Bamdad shod, bang zad khoroos
Az tamane shahr bar zadand kous
Charkh shosteh naq rouye abnoos
Moobeda (ey javan) toe ham khiz orouy shou.

**Khan Ashem Vohu, Gou Yataahu
Gou Yataahu, khan Ashem Vohu**

Khiz moobeda, Atashi forooz
Pardeh syah zin zamaneh suz
Kishe bastan zendehdan hanooz
Zizadi forough barmatab rou.

**Khan Ashem Vohu, Gou Yataahu
Gou Yataahu, khan Ashem Vohu**

Khahi ar khoshi, ranjehdan tan
Koush o sarnegoun saz ahreman
Ta ze band vey va rahad vatan
Vangahi paye nam o aberou.

**Khan Ashem Vohu, Gou Yataahu
Gou Yataahu, khan Ashem Vohu**

Rast bayadat bood o marde kar
Pahlevan manesh, ruze karzar
Dar setiz ba dive nabekar
Chon niyaye khod, pad o nik-khouy.

**Khan Ashem Vohu, Gou Yataahu
Gou Yataahu, khan Ashem Vohu**

Rou matab as in gange shaygan
Sar mapich as in pand bastan
Rasti sheno, rasti bekhaan
Rasti bejoo, rasti begou.

**Khan Ashem Vohu, Gou Yataahu
Gou Yataahu, khan Ashem Vohu**

Dawn appeared, the cock crowed
Drums were beaten all over the city
Cycle (of life) has now wiped out ebony
O! Moobed (young man) rise thou.

**Sing thou Ashem Vohu
Say thou Yathaa Ahoo**

Rise O! Moobed, light a fire
From its flame burn the dark curtain
Revive the ancient religion
Don't turn your face from the divine brightness.

**Sing thou Ashem Vohu
Say thou Yathaa Ahoo**

You must be truthful and be a man of work,
Having the nature of a hero, on the battle day.
Fight against the wicked devil
As your ancestors, pure and good mannered.

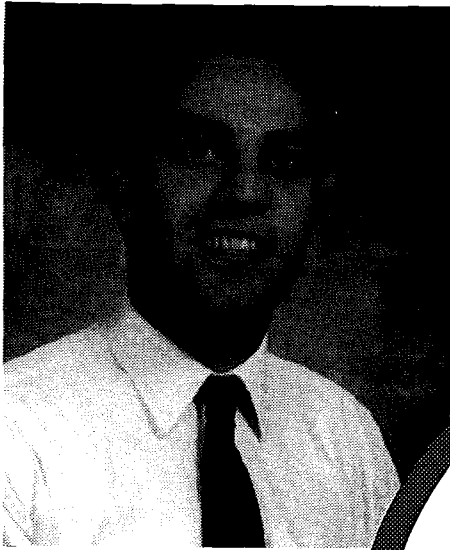
**Sing thou, Ashem Vohu
Say thou, Yathaa Ahoo**

If you wish to gain happiness
Suffer and pain (no pain no gain!)
Try to defeat Ahriman and free your fatherland
Then follow fame and honor.

**Sing thou, Ashem Vohu
Say thou, Yathaa Ahoo**

Approve this worthy treasure
Obey the ancient advice
Listen to righteousness, sing righteousness
Search righteousness, say righteousness.

**Sing thou, Ashem Vohu
Say thou, Yathaa Ahoo**



"I love poetry," says Khodadad (Khodi) Kaviani. "Persian poetry kept me culturally alive during my years in the US." Kaviani left Iran in 1979 to pursue an MA in International Studies at the University of Washington. After a few years in banking, he has served as a mathematics and social studies teacher and administrator at a junior high school in Kent, Washington for the past ten years.

By some chance, he met Saeed Shahraam, an accomplished composer with over 17 movie sound tracks to his credit, whose movie

Khodi Kaviani

Song-writer Kaviani has recorded the proud message of Zartosht, Jashn-e Meher-gaan and Jashn-e Sadeh for posterity on the "Ancient Whispers" CD.

Aabaadaaneehaa won the "Best Film" award at the 1994 Interna-

life into them". Later he invited popular Iranian singer, Ms. Nooshafarin, to come to Washington to sing in the album.

Together, they worked long and hard, along with the support of many friends and well-wishers, to produce the *Ancient Whispers* album (*Nedaaye Neeyaakaan*). "It is amazing how much time it takes to produce just one minute of music," says Kaviani.

With a handsome cover depicting a 'Freedom Cedar' (*sarv-e azaad*) in green and gold as seen on the walls of Takht-e Jamshid, symbolizing progress and freedom, "the values of our ancestors," and a dictionary of terms in Persian and English, the CD is a most creditable attempt at preserving the ancient Zarathushti cultural heritage. The CD is available by contacting Kaviani at (253) 529-8702 or email: khodi@aol.com.



tional Film Festival in Locarno, Switzerland. Kaviani had the lyrics and Shahraam "knew how to breathe



l. to r., Farhad Mehrkhodavandi, Parvaneh Jamshidian, Negar Demehri, Mojgan Edalati, Trity Pourbahrami, Shahryar Khosraviani, Jamshid Jamshidi, Afrouz Demehri, Mahzad Khosraviani, Vista Pourbahrami, Anoshirvan Bakhtiani, Feraydoon Demehri. Not present: Homa Sorooshi, Mahnaz Bastani, Mandana Edalati, Jamshid Shoghli.

The Gatha Group

was officially born on Asho Zarathushtra's birthday this year (Roz Khordad, Mah Fravardin 3737). A choir of 15 Zarathushti singers 12 - 51 years of age, from Vancouver, they write, arrange and sing Zarathushti religious, spiritual, traditional and folk songs, in Gathic, Dari and Farsi, and are now ready for public performance. The group has recorded several songs which they plan to market shortly. Contact Feraydoon Demehri at 2092 Gordon Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7V 1V7, tel: (604) 926-9891, email: orferidem@netcom.ca

Early Parsi Musicians & Orchestras

Parsi musicians, bands and orchestras were among the first to bring Western music to Bombay, in the early 1900s.



Eminent pianist and conductor, Jehangir Khodaiji (center) conducting India's first all-female Western music ensemble, the Young Ladies High School Orchestra, founded by him in the early 1900s. The Parsi ladies, in beautiful 'garas' played violins, mandolins, cello, double bass and even drums.

[Photo courtesy Phiroz Dastoor and Roda Khodaiji]

Gagaku – Court Music of Japan

Persian music along with music from other regions of continental Asia influenced the Gagaku form of Japanese music.



TOKYO GAKUSŌ

町田市立図書館

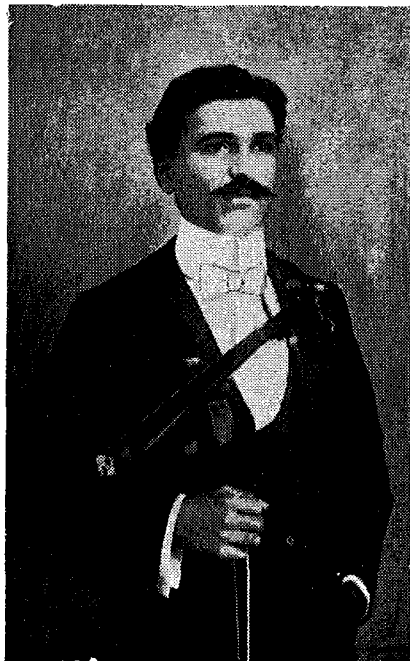
Music from continental Asia, primarily Persian, was introduced into Japan over a period of 400 years from the fifth to the ninth centuries. Along with Chinese and Korean influences, this music evolved into one of the forms of Japanese Court Music – Gagaku, that is performed, to this day, at religious ceremonies and at Imperial Court festivals.

Among other Persian cultural treasures that were carried into Japan were musical instruments, ceremonial masks, glass cups and works of art. According to some theories, the Persians themselves also came to Japan. Almost all Japanese feel nostalgic for the 'Silk Road', along which much of this influence came to China and Japan. Further information can be found at www.jpan.org/music/garyokai/index-e.html.

[Submitted by Ms. Noriko Katsuki, a graduate of Chuo-u University in Tokyo, Japan, who is currently engaged in research for a master's thesis on the "Present Condition of Zoroastrians".]

Three Generations of Khodaijis entertain Bombay

PHOTOS: PHIROZ DASTOOR, RODA KHODAJI



Ardeshir Khodaiji (1863-1916), patriarch of the line of musicians and orchestra-leaders, son **Jehangir Khodaiji** (1883-1970) and grandson **Jal Khodaiji** (1912-1992). [See FEZANA Journal, Winter 1996].

PHOTO: PARSİ LUSTRE ON INDIAN SOIL



Above, pianist **Bhikaiji Palamkote** (born in 1867) had the unique distinction, of being the only Indian among 50 European musicians who were Life Academic Members of the Trinity College of Music, London. Herself a recipient of numerous awards, over 200 of Bhikaiji's music students fared well at Trinity College examinations. She also organized numerous concerts for charity.

Mehli Casinath - the forgotten genius

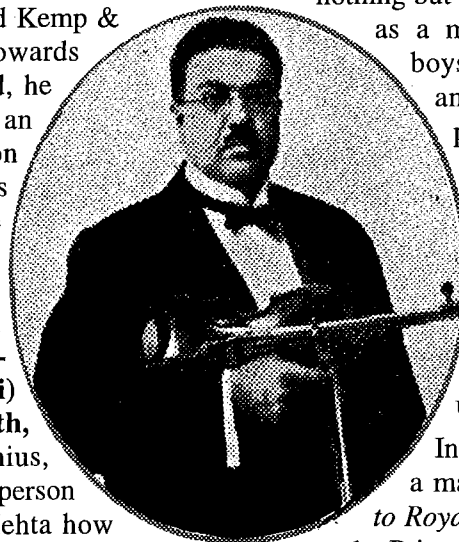
Turning the clock back to the early 1930s, there are people who may still remember Mehli Mehta [see page 46] trudging up Gowalia Tank Road in Mumbai, with his violin case in his hand. Going past the old Kemp & Co., down towards Nepean Sea Road, he would turn into an imposing gate on the right, that leads to a palatial estate by the sea. This was Casinath Hall, the ancestral domain of **Merwanji (Mehli) Bomanji Casinath**, the forgotten genius, who was the first person to teach Mehli Mehta how to tuck the violin under his chin.

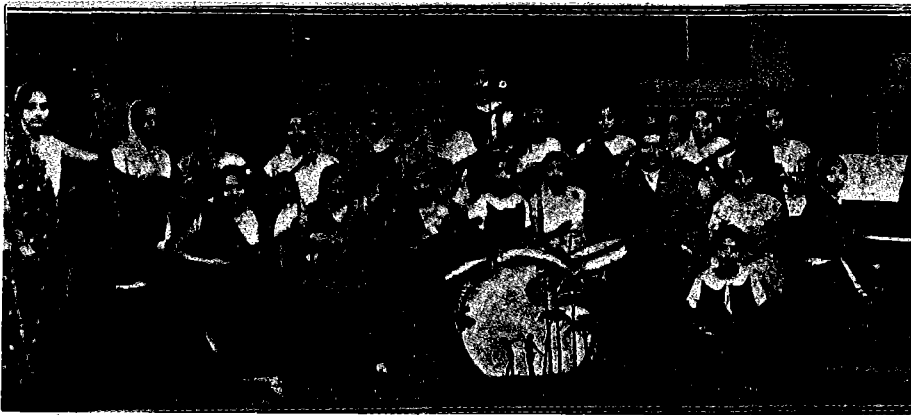
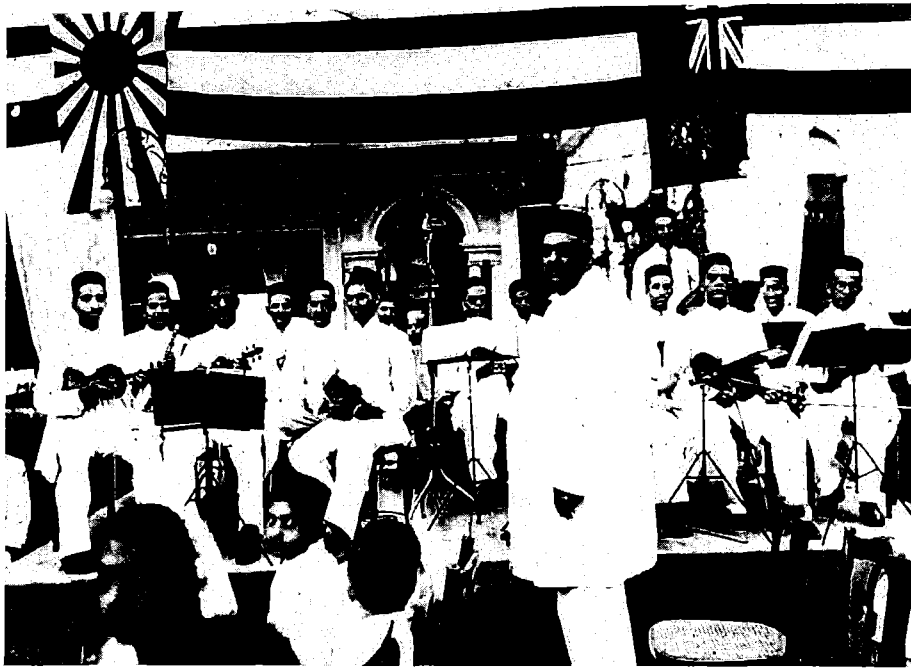
Born in 1894, Casinath learned to play the violin on his own. There was no one to teach him. Having mastered the violin as much as he could, he went on to be just as proficient in playing other instruments – piano, sax, cello, vibes and also the harmo-

nium (for by this time he had become an exponent of Indian ragas as well).

He now started giving lessons in all these instruments; his joy in playing them was so complete that it could do nothing but inspire. As his fame as a music-teacher grew, boys and girls from far and near became his pupils. This versatile man also had other accomplishments to his credit. He not only ran a private school of music, but was also a composer of uncommon merit.

In 1921, he composed a march, *Parsi Loyalty to Royalty*, and dedicated it to the Prince. In 1926, Casinath wrote the *Pahlavi March* to commemorate the coronation of Reza Shah Pahlavi. The famous *Sanjan March*, which even today finds the Parsis in a daze of happy nostalgia, is his brainchild; and so is *Zoroastrian March*.





PHOTOS: PARSIANA, NOVEMBER 1997

The Casinath Band, called the Young Men's Parsi Orchestra and the Parsi women's orchestra which Mehli Casinath also founded, with his wife, Dhun.

As early as 1930, he had formed a 14-piece orchestra of young Parsi men, complete with a male crooner. The Casinath band, called the Young Men's Parsi Orchestra dressed in spotlessly white *daglis* and Parsi *topis* was especially popular for navjotes and weddings.

They would play all the Parsi favorite numbers, from *Strauss waltzes* and *O Sole Mio* to *Isle of Capri* and *Amapola*. At the end of the evening, as they would strike up the *Zoroastrian National Anthem*, one of his own compositions, you could hear the sound of a thousand chairs scraping the ground as the entire Albless (or Cama) Baug, would rise and stand at

attention. After this, one would hear the strains of *God Save the King*, and then the clinking of glasses and the *salamatis*, signing off the end of a happy day. But this was not all. With his wife, Dhun, this amazing man formed a Parsi women's orchestra which became immensely popular and gave a number of concerts for local charities.

A genial happy, gregarious giant of a man (he was over 6 feet tall) Casinath died in 1957 at the age of 63. ■

[Excerpted by Roshan Rivetna from "Mehli Oozed with Inborn Musical Talent" by Ali Rajabally, *Mid-Day*, July 3, 1983. Photos courtesy *Mid-Day*.]

Popular Bands and Orchestras in India

Goody Seervai and Nelly were the two most popular bands for Navjotes, Weddings and other celebrations in Mumbai

Among the most popular bands in the latter half of the 20th century were the bands of Goody Seervai and Nelly Battiwalla. Both accordion players themselves, their bands have regaled countless navjotes and weddings in the *baugs* of Mumbai for several decades. Goody Seervai is no more. Nelly is still around, but does not play any more. Goody's son, Jango Seervai, now carries on his father's tradition.

There are a few other Parsi bands, the oldest among them being *Darling Orchestra*, which has been in existence for over 60 years now, led by Dara Mehta and then his son, Marzban Mehta. Silloo Shapurjee also has her own orchestra. *High-jackers*, whose leader is Mehernosh Tantra, *Beli, Minoo and the Melody Boys* (named after owner-partners Beli and Minoo), and Jimmy Sahiar's band are other recent additions to the music scene in Mumbai.

Then there is the promising 24-year-old Firoze Farrokh Patel, an expert drummer and now a noted music director who provides music for TV shows.

- By Shenaz Munshi

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams - Eleanor Roosevelt

Harmonica Legend Phiroze M. Damri

Dubbed "the greatest harmonica player India has ever produced" by American harmonica genius Larry Adler, Damri popularized the harmonica in India and coached three generations of students.

PHOTO: PARSIANA, JUNE 1998



Damri (center) conducting his all-ladies' harmonica orchestra, 1940s.

In November 1937, Matth Hohner of Germany had come to Mumbai in search of a person to promote their harmonica (mouth organ) in India. By sheer chance he was introduced to young **Phiroze Damri**, who at that time played the violin in Mehli Casinath's orchestra [see page 32]. Damri knew nothing about harmonica's, but Hohner gave him a book *How to Play the Harmonica the Easy Way* and appointed him the official Hohner representative in India, at a monthly salary of Rs. 80. He was to sell the harmonicas at Rs. 8.50 each and to teach his pupils free of charge.

That was the beginning of a life-long love affair with the mouth organ. He soon mastered the instrument and gradually gained popularity with his students. Just six months after he took up playing, he gave his first broadcast over All India Radio (which was at that time a one-room studio at Ballard Pier, with a piano in one corner and a wooden stage with a microphone). Since then his orchestras have performed regularly on AIR.

When World War II broke out in 1939, his connections with Germany were cut and his salary stopped. To support

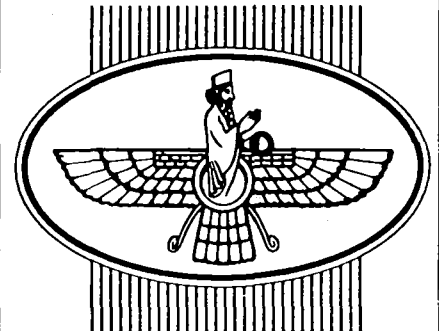
himself financially, Damri now started charging his students a fee of 8 annas (half a rupee). During the war his student orchestras played for a number of charities, steadily gaining popularity and publicity. He was able to complete his advanced violin classes and went on to play with the Bombay Symphony Orchestra and the Bombay Philharmonic Orchestra.

Damri was invited to the First World Harmonica Festival in 1953, in Dusseldorf, Germany. Here, dressed in the Parsi dagli and cap, he played some Indian tunes. In appreciation of his continuing efforts to popularize the harmonica in India, Matth Hohner presented him with a plaque, a piano accordion and some harmonicas to add to his large collection of those instruments.

In 1997, Damri celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of his Hohner Harmonica Club. Under the baton of the now 84-year old Damri, three generations of students performed at the gala event.

[Compiled by Roshan Rivetna. Sources: Shenaz Munshi, Jam-e Jamshed, November 30, 1997.]

ZOROASTRIAN MELODIES



Participants : Mehernosh Wadia,
Sanobar Parabia, Naynaz Jamadar
Recording Engineer: Rumi Baria
Music arranger : Yunus Parmar

ZOROASTRIAN MELODIES

By Marzban Giara

Marzban Giara has produced a cassette of 21 Zarathushti religious and communal songs, adapted for effect, with a keyboard synthesizer and rhythm mixer.

"As a child, I had the good fortune to sing and enjoy Zarathushti melodies at school and at home. At the Ranina Nursery, our day began with *Rudi Savar Sad Hojo* (to the tune of He's a Jolly Good Fellow), while at the J. B. Vachha School we used to sing *O Khuda tu ek chhe* At the Navjote classes at Pervez Hall we learnt to sing other popular songs, e.g. *Jaya Jarthost*.

"Many of the songs in this cassette were composed by Ervad Burjorji Mullan, a blind mobed who was our neighbor in Navsari. He had an excellent command over the harmonium and violin, and would sing with great religious fervor."

This stereo audio cassette is available from Mr. Giara, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400014, tel: 412-0371.

Parsi Devotional & Festive Songs

A plethora of Parsi devotional and festive songs exist, and are an integral part of the Parsi musical tradition. In fact, in earlier centuries, 'goyans' (lady singers) were hired to sing on happy occasions or when a boon was granted. Mostly passed down orally or in hand-written notebooks, these heirlooms could easily be scattered and lost. FEZANA Journal here showcases some such treasures as also some recent attempts at recording these gems of our Zarathushti heritage.



I AM PROUD TO BE A ZOROASTRIAN

Shenaz Munshi wrote the lyrics for the 26 songs in this cassette and adapted them to popular English melodies. With her creative flair, she teaches kids every aspect of the Good Religion, from the Creation Story to our history and festivals.



KHUSHALI NA GEET NE GARBA

A cassette of traditional and joyous Parsi songs, known in Gujarati as *garbas* and *monajats*. Most have their origin in the villages of Gujarat, and a rich source of information about the socio-religious and cultural lifestyle of 19th century Parsis.

Audio Cassettes by Zoroastrian Studies

Mumbai-based *Zoroastrian Studies*, under the dynamic leadership of Khojeste Mistree, has produced a number of audio cassettes of religious and festive songs - three of which are profiled below.

The audio-tape projects were realized through the creative genius of Shenaz Munshi, who wrote or rearranged many of the lyrics, which reflect various aspects of Zarathushti doctrine and customs. The cassettes also acknowledge: Zubin Balaporia for his "superb ability to adapt traditional Parsi rhythms to modern music", Freny Dalal-Paghdwala for directing and leading the Crystal Choral and a host of other dedicated and talented musicians and supporters. ■



IT'S NAVJOTE TIME SONGS AND PRAYERS

A step-by-step audio-commentary on the Navjote ceremony, along with a recitation of Navjote prayers and religious songs (lyrics by Shenaz Munshi) adapted to English melodies, making the learning of prayers simple and pleasurable.



Often called the Parsi National Anthem, *Chaiye Hame Zarathushti* is a song of aspiration, a prayer of hope, a confession of faith and shows the way for the Zarathushti community to prosper and grow. Written by poet and song-writer Kavi Feroze Rustomji Batliwalla [see page 38] in the late 1800s, originally as the closing song in a natak (Parsi play), *Chaiye Hame Zarathushti*, sung to the catchy tune of the World War I English song, *Goodbye, My Bluebell*, soon gained in popularity as Parsis began to sing it with pride at every occasion.

Music arrangements written by
Farobag Homi Cooper.

Chaiye hame Zarathushti, re Mazdayasni nek,
Kul jahan sathay dosti, rakhye nibhavye tek,
Muthij bhar aa tolo, saoo eelam no sangar,
Re bol bala bolo teni saoo nar ne naar.

Chorus:

**O tokham Kyani! O jag mashoor
O saoo sadgoon ma sacchi ne bharpoor
Kayem rahi jalavje shoobh tooj no jom
Abadi sathe too, O Zarathushti kom!**

We are good Mazdayasni Zarathushtis
Of worldwide friendship, maintaining dignity.
This small band, embellishment of all knowledge
Acclaim aloud its glory, men and women all.

Chorus:

**O! of Kyanian heritage, world renowned
Brimming with true and good qualities
Preserve with pride this fervor for eternity
Live in prosperity, Zarathushti community!**

Bohli sakhavat hathe de che jagat jaher
Bahu chanchaliai sathe saoo vat ma maher
Goozri jafao bhari, to pan na chhodio dharam
Tethi mali rabyari, tej kharo chhe bharam.

Known the world over, giver of large charities
Clever and knowledgeable in all matters
Suffered vicissitudes yet forsook not the faith
Received God's mercy, truth beneath their mystery.

Sukhdai stree kelavni, jaino dipavay bahar
Gun nekni melavni rakhe sukhi sansar
Poshakni khubi ke chhe aur jehan mashoor
Te komni banu thai chaiye hame magroor.

Education of our women, blossoms like spring
Virtues and goodness mix for a happy home life
Renowned the world over for gracefulness of dress
We are proud, she is the lady of our community.

Jeni vafadari par padya nathi koi dagh
Aaj rajni yari per ladshe mishale vagh
Nimakhalali jami, te per bani dilsoj
Aa fej aaje paami khush tha too O Firoze.

There is no mark or blemish on our loyalty
For our country we will fight like a tiger
For loyalty displayed, for bounties come today
Rejoice ardently, O Firoze.

[Courtesy Virasp Mehta, Informal Religious Meetings]

[Translation courtesy F. K. Dadachanji]

Chaiye Hame Zarathushti

ARRANGEMENT BY
FAROBAG HOMI COOPER

A handwritten musical score for the piece 'Chaiye Hame Zarathushti'. The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings. There are several first and second endings marked with '1.' and '2.'. Handwritten annotations include 'trm' (trill) and 'LH' (left hand). The score concludes with a double bar line and a final chord.

Kavi Feroz Rustomji Batliwalla

Poet and song-writer,
composer of *Chaiye*
Hame Zarathushti



Feroze Batliwalla was born in Navsari in 1846 and soon became a household name gaining popularity as much for his poems and songs as for his affable

nature. Most notably, he is remembered for having written the lyrics for what has now come to be known as the Parsi National Anthem, *Chaiye Hame Zarathushii*.

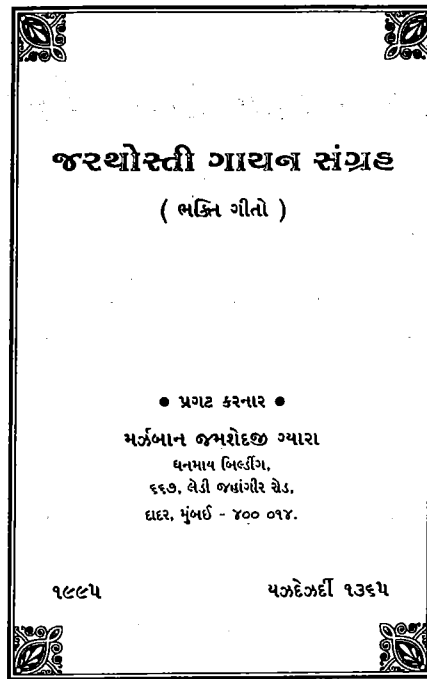
In 1912, a few months prior to his death, he gifted his entire collection of songs composed by him to the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* [see page 41]. The collection was contained in three works, *Ferozi Gayan Sangrah*, *Sitam-e Mina* and *Saroday Avesta*. It is unknown whether the first two works were published, but *Saroday Avesta* was, in 1930, by the Mandali. It contains 43 songs based on prayers from the Khordeh Avesta and 58 devotional songs. ■

[From *What's On*, Karachi Banu Mandal Newsletter]

Rashtra Kavi Ardeshtir Framji Khabardar National poet of India

Kavi Khabardar was given the title of National Poet by Mahatma Gandhi himself. Born in 1881, his literary genius as an author and poet who wrote about diverse subjects and a writer of patriotic songs was soon recognized. His poems were full of philosophical truths and inspired the youth of his time. ■

[By *Shenaz Munshi* from *Jame Jamshed*, September 6, 1992]



JARTHOSHTI GAYAN SANGRAH

By *Marzban Giara*

Softcover, 77 pp., 1995. In Gujarati, available from Mr. Giara, 667 Lady Jehangir Road, Dadar, Mumbai 400014, tel: 412-0371.

Mr. Giara has provided a valuable service to the community by collecting and publishing almost a hundred Parsi devotional songs in praise of Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra and the religion as well as a number of monajats and prayers. ■



Freny Dalal-Paghdwala & her Crystal Choral

Freny Dalal-Paghdwala, a veteran of 40 years in the music business, teaches classical western singing, and along with her 40-member *Crystal Choral*, which she formed in 1977, has sung her way into the hearts of Mumbai audiences.

With training in Vocal Technique and Western Classical Singing, a Diploma in the London Trinity College of Music Performer Singer's exam, 13 years of teaching classing singing and vocal technique at Girton High School in Mumbai, and training children and adults in her own private classes, Freny went on, in 1977 to form her

own private choir group comprising of juniors (6-15) [photo page 62] and seniors (over 16) [above].

The choir performs annually at Christmas and also, as needed, for charitable causes. Among other engagements, they have been invited to entertain guests at the Oberoi Towers in Mumbai, lent their voices for the audio cassettes of songs/prayers produced by Zoroastrian Studies, taped Zarathushti prayers with Parvez Doctor and sang for Meher Madon-Jansen's ballet concert, *Ahura*, providing a musical rendition of our prayers. - By *Shenaz Munshi*

Shenaz Neville Munshi

Song-writer, teacher, singer and dedicated Zarathushti

A dedicated follower of Khojeste Mistree's Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) group, **Shenaz Neville Munshi**, has lent her creative genius with a passion to bring many a project to fruition.

It was Shenaz's vision and drive that resulted in the three audio cassettes of religious and festive songs produced by ZS. She is currently working on two new cassettes: the first a children's cassette with songs in English; and the other, Volume II of *Khushali na Geet* which will have

some more nuggets that need to be passed on to the next generation. Most of the lyrics for these songs and musical composition for two of them, are by Shenaz. Following these two ambitious projects, Shenaz plans to bring out a cassette of *Parsi Natak na Geeto*, with Kersi Mistry.

It was her love for music that inspired her to work on the *Atash nu Geet*, a beautiful song on Fire, composed perhaps in the early 18th century. This song, which was specially sung by the 'goyans' (lady singers) on happy occasions or when a boon was granted, is very, very long. It took them four hours to complete it. Shenaz has translated the song word by word for a Ph.D. research thesis by Sarah Stewart of SOAS, London.



Shenaz has also worked with Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek on Oral Tradition Among Parsis and the book *Living Zoroastrianism*, Volume I.

"Some of the beautiful Gujarati songs and monajats," says Shenaz, "I learnt from my dear mother, grandmother and aunt." Born and brought up in a conservative Zarathushti home, her life was steeped, since childhood, in Zarathushti customs and traditions.

"For every occasion there was a song," reflects Shenaz, "There was a song for the ceremonial bath which we were given on our birthdays, there were beautiful lullaby's extolling the virtues of truth and honesty, there were love songs, and songs of joy and sadness when a daughter got married and left her parents' home.

"My grandmother, Virbaiji would burst into song at the drop of a hat. Often I would lie down by her side on her four-poster and ask her to sing me my favorite songs. And if it was a sad song, invariably, I would hug her and cry. So when I became a part and parcel of ZS and began to teach kids, I felt it my responsibility to pass on these songs to them."

- By Roshan Rivetna

Music in Parsi Natak (Plays)

Hilarious Parsi natak (comedies and farces), such as those by playwrights Adi Marzban and Homi Tavadia are a unique and well-loved part of the Parsi tradition. Music played an important part in these plays, with comic songs interspersed, with live music playing.

Some well-known and well-remembered names of song-writers and performers in these gems of Parsi culture are: Sohrabji Katrak, Keki Sahiar, Mr. Mapla, Mr. Goriya, Framroze Shroff, Bapuji Mistry, Mr. Udvadia, Pirojshah Mistry, Kersi Mistry, Dara Mehta and Dali Palkhiwalla.

Dali Palkhiwalla

Song-writer, composer and performer of festive, comic and religious Gujarati songs.



DALI PALKHIWALLA'S
SAGAN LAGAN & MANORANJAN
(VOL. 2)
GUJARATI SONGS ON NAVJOTE, LAGAN
BIRTHDAY, PARTY RECIPES, VAHU AYI VAHU
ATASHA KEELA PAR SAN JODHUNO &
OTHER PARSİ HAPPY OCCASIONS

Accompanying himself on the organ, or harmonium, the ever-smiling and jovial **Dali Palkhiwalla** has entertained at many a party, navjote or wedding celebration and brought cheer to many hearts with his performances at various Parsi baugs, colonies and hospitals.

Palkhiwalla has produced six volumes of audio cassettes, including *Haso ne Hasavo* (featuring comic songs like *Mara Boot ni Kahani* and *Coomi Kachi Kumari*), *Jarthosti Jalso* and *Sagan Lagan and Manoranjan* (featuring festive songs for happy occasions) and tapes of devotional songs.

Born in 1918, Dali learnt musical ragas under the noted Vistasp Balsara, and in 1937, joined Mehli Casinath's band where he played until 1950. Over the years he has played in most of the noted bands of the last few decades: Goody Seervai, Sheri Irani's *Zoroastrian Symphonians*, the *Zoroastrian Rhythmners* (1939-40), Khodaiji's, Behram Irani's, Peti-

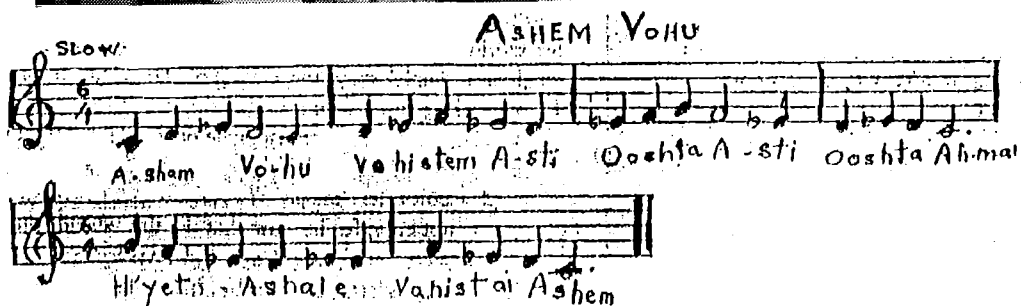
The place of honor in the Rustomji family drawing-room was given to the piano, a loving gift from Behli Rustomji's father Sohrab to his mother Tehmina. Behli was "blessed with a great ear", he had only to hear something once, to be able to play it and make it sound great. In 1947, when the new nation of Pakistan needed a national anthem, Behli felt compelled to try and write something. However, his friend Mr. Chagla approached him and hummed a tune he had written. Behli immediately went to the family piano and played it.

"I was the first person to play Pakistan's national anthem," says Behli today, with pride, "the fact that it was played on our family piano, makes it a very valuable piece of history."

Behram (Behli) Sohrab J. J. Rustomji was born in Karachi in 1912. He had risen to become principal of the Bai Virbaijee Sopariwalla (BVS) Parsi Boys School in Karachi, which he had attended himself as a student some decades earlier. He spent some years in England, obtaining a teaching diploma, taking courses at the Royal College of Music and attending summer school at Cambridge.

Behram (Behli) Sohrab Rustomji

Blessed with a great ear for music



Above, Behli Rustomji and wife Gool, together composed many songs in Gujarati and English. Below, the Ashem Vohu set to a simple tune by Behli.

gara's and Nelly's bands. He also worked with the late playwright Adi Marzban in many of his natak and is a professional harmonium player. In 1962, he founded the Musicians and Dramaticians Combined Society.

The life of over 500 Gujarati stage shows, composer of more than 500 Gujarati songs and 75 religious songs, the 81-year-old Dali is ever popular. At one of his shows, a favorite song, written and composed by Dali, was encored by the audience over 15 times! - By Shenaz Munshi

*Happiness is
a journey, not
a destination*

- Author unknown

Ladies of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) singing festive songs at a wedding ceremony at the Darbe Mehr in Chicago.



Behli's love of music was infectious and even now, he has only to see a piano to sit down and play. As his many students will remember, no BVS function was complete without a rousing rendition of Chaiye Hame Zarathushti and national anthems, all sung with great gusto.

Together with his wife Gool, who also loves to write, Behli composed many songs - on Zarathushti heritage, devotional songs, and songs for navjotes, weddings and special occasions, in Gujarati and English. His favorite is the one many children learned in Montessori:

Give all you can
Help all you can
Happiness to him
Who befriends all men.

In many ways, this song exemplifies Behli's practice of the religion of Zarathushtra. Only recently he wrote: "Ashem Vohu tells us to be good, Yatha Ahu Vairyo tells us to do good and Yenghe Hatam says we must honor the good deeds of all people. Please spread this beautiful message in our prayers among all the young people in the new world." ■

[Behli Rustomji is father of Roshni Rustomji-Kerns of San Francisco and uncle of Anahita Sidhwa of Dallas, Texas, who wrote the above piece. Interested in compiling and preserving Behli and Gool's works, Anahita has had her mother transcribe some song-books into English and will be happy to share these treasures with interested persons. Call Anahita at (972) 462-1553.]

Tape of Old Parsi Songs Available

By chance I came across, at Chor Bazar, some old Parsi Gujarati songs on 75 rpm records: *Gota Golab ne Champa no Har*, (which, in my childhood, growing up in Khetwadi, whenever we heard being played in anyone's house, would mean they were celebrating a birthday or other happy occasion, and we would patiently await the dish of *sev* and *dahi* generously sprinkled with almonds to arrive); *Jer Jehangir no Jagdo, Ek Eeda ni Ladai* (about early morning fights between neighbors) and *Tapeli Chula Per* (extolling the virtues of Parsi cuisine). I have had these records transferred to tape. Tapes are available at cost at Yazdani Bakery, Cowasji Patel Street, Fort, Mumbai.

Zend M. Zend
Proprietor, Yazdani Bakery, Mumbai

Zarathushtis On the Music Scene in India

Showcasing the achievements of Parsi men and women on the classical and pop music scene in India.

By Shenaz Neville Munshi

CONTRIBUTION OF PARSIS TO INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

[Based partly on a research paper by Dr. Aban E. Mistry.]

In 1870, **Kaikhushru Nowroji Kabraji**, editor of a popular journal, *Rasht Gofar*, formed the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* (or Organization for the Encouragement of Songs), to promote appreciation of and training in Indian classical music among music lovers of the era.

This effort caused a stir among Parsis, as it was, then, an era when singers were frowned upon, the kind of music shows organized by the Kabraji were considered to be the prerogative of kings and nobles, and

only court dancers and singers entered into this profession.

Unmindful of the criticism, Kabraji continued his efforts, becoming among the first to increase awareness of Indian music among Parsis. Membership of the Mandali reads like a Parsi Who's Who, and had on its rolls, such stalwarts as Dadabhai Naoroji, Bomanji D. Petit, Jehangir B. Petit, Hormusji Cama and Pheroze-shah Mehta among a host of other leading men and women of the day.

Kabraji died in 1904, leaving behind a rich legacy of music and a growing membership in his Mandali. The Mandali was active until 1947, opening doors for a large number of talented Parsi men and women.

In 1961, Pandit Keki Jijina and Aban Mistry founded the **Swar Sadhna Samiti**, noted all over India for the leading role it has played in showcasing budding artistes. Many an amateur musician has found a platform here to gain recognition and prominence in the field of Indian classical music. To date, it has organized 450 monthly programs, festivals and competitions, and awarded scholarships.

The two main *ragas* (musical modes) of Indian classical music are *Raga Khayal Gayaki* and *Dhrupad Gayaki*. In Khayal Gayaki, the names that come to the fore are **Shirin Doctor**,

Freny Cama, Khorshed Mullan, Hirabai Mistry, Meher Working-boxwalla, Coomi Lakdawalla, Coomi Pohwalla, Jerbanu Mistry, Peroja Dastur, Khurshed Minocherhomji (also known as Saraswati Devi), **Aloo Patel** and **Kumari Mini Patel. Dinaz Minwalla** of Karachi has also studied this raga and earned a name for herself. Dozens of other noteworthy Zarathushtis who have contributed to Indian classical music that have not been mentioned due to lack of space.

Pandit Firoze Dastur can be said to be singularly responsible for bringing recognition to the Parsi community in the field of the Gayaki Raga. He is internationally known for his skill in the *kirana gharana* (a particular style of Indian music). He is the recipient of numerous prestigious honors, among them the title of *Kalidasa* from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, *Kala Gaurav* from the Government of Maharashtra, and an honorary doctorate from South Gujarat University.

Pandit Jal Ballaporia is a well-known exponent of the Gwalior *gharana*, an expert in *Khayal* as well as *Tappa Gayaki*, internationally known for his beautiful voice, his style of singing as well as his deep understanding of the nuances of the ragas. Dr. Shirin Ratnagar is an expert in the Dhrupad Raga.

Among well-known artistes in instrumental music are **Zarin Daruwalla-Sharma**, an expert in *sarod vadan* (string instruments) and **Pandit Hirjibhai Doctor**, an expert on the *veena* and principal of the M. S. Music College in Baroda for 22 years.

Among noted ghazal singers are **Pinaz Masani, Behroze Chatterji, Farrokh Bardoliwalla** and **Soli Kapadia**. These artistes can also render bhajans and other light classical songs with equal finesse.

The late Rustam Kak Hathidaru of Ahmednagar was perhaps the only Parsi who could render Marathi songs in the Bal Gandharva style with such

eclat that Maharashtrian music lovers who listened to him were choked with emotion.

The first lady music director in Indian cinema was a Parsi – **Sushri Khorshed Minocherhomji**, in the 1940s. Her songs, based on the classical form, are sung even today fifty years after they were composed, by lovers of Indian music.

PROFILES OF NOTEWORTHY PARSİ MUSICIANS OF INDIA

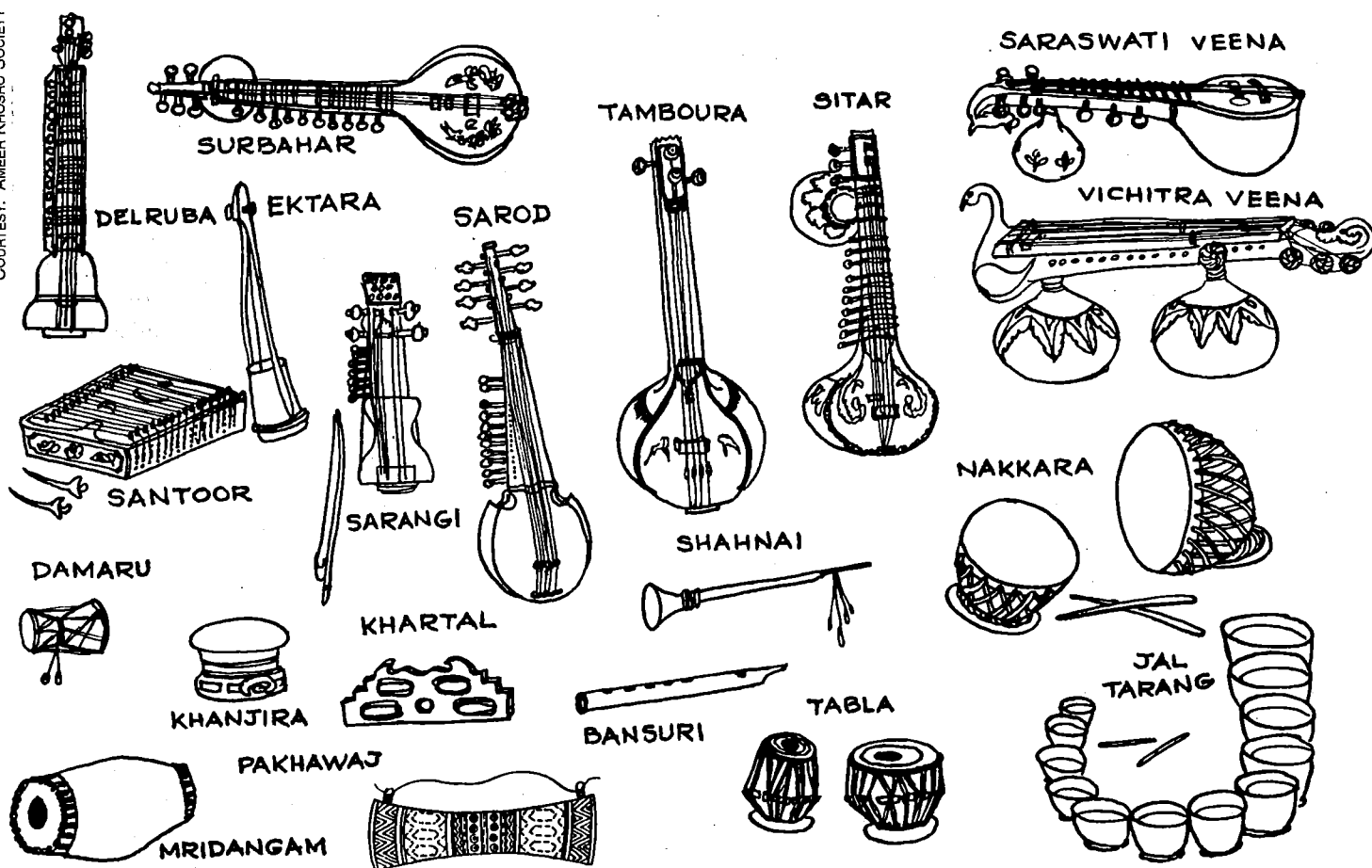
Only a cross-section of some of the many Parsi musicians in India, is given here (in alphabetical order). Due to lack of space not all noteworthy artistes could be recognized.

JALOO BHESANIA

Singer, playback singer, TV and radio artiste

Well-known in the musical world, popularly known as B. Kamlesh Kumari, **Jaloo Bhesania** [photo

COURTESY: AMEER KHOSRO SOCIETY



page 46] is the daughter of a priest from Surat. Her musical talents were discovered at an early age, and she has been working since then, with Kersi Mistry, giving voice to his many compositions.

A *Sangeet Visharad* of Lucknow University, she has received honors and accolades for her rendition of classical ragas and from HMV for her soulful singing of bhajans and Gujarati folk songs. She has also lent her voice as a playback singer in Gujarati and Hindi films, and is an eminent radio and TV artiste. ■

MAESTRO VISTASP BALSARA Composer and performer



PHOTO: PARSIANA, OCTOBER 1996

All-round musician, performer (he plays several Indian and Western instruments), composer and music director for Indian film, radio and TV, **Vistasp Balsara** of Calcutta is a stalwart of Indian as well as Western music in India.

Balsara first sang light bhajans, accompanying himself on the harmonium (which along with the piano, is his favorite instrument), in 1928 at the age of six, and has never looked

back. On the music scene for almost 70 years, Balsara has worked as musician, arranger and music director in the Indian film industry for over 50 years (in 30 Bengali, 5 Hindi, 4 Nepalese and 2 Oriya films, with famous playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi and Asha Bhosale) and is currently also active in TV, radio and on stage.

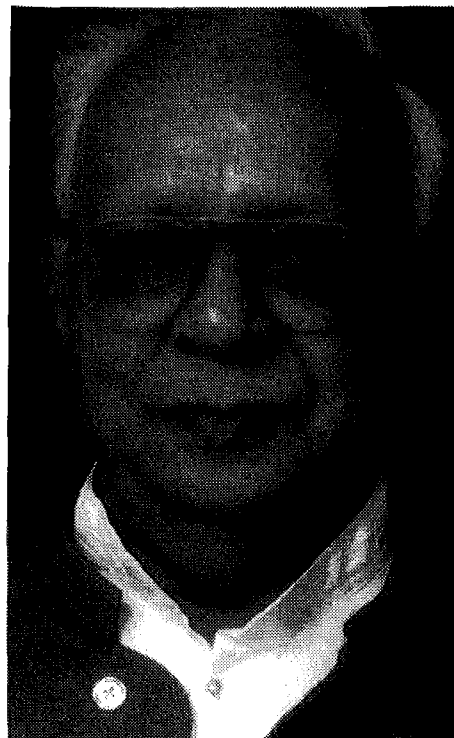
He loves to experiment. No wonder then, that he has succeeded in presenting Indian classical music on a western instrument, the piano, giving Indian ragas an entirely new dimension. Although he uses chords, most orthodox Indian musicians agree that it does not disturb the essence or pattern of a raga. He explains this in a book: he authored: *Western Chords in Indian Ragas*.

Committed to encouraging new talent, he formed the YOU Music Circle in Mumbai, a forum for seminars and discussions on music. On moving to Calcutta in 1954, with his wife Aloo, he met **Dhun Indorewalla**, a singer par excellence, who was his disciple and vocal accompanist for 32 years.

Balsara has the distinction of getting Rabindranath Tagore's songs translated and presented in 16 Indian and 8 foreign languages. He also presented an Indian Symphony Orchestra with 80 musicians, projecting different moods in Tagore's poem *Debatar Grash*. As a result of extensive research, he has compiled a series of 304 scales in chronological order.

He has traveled widely in the Middle East, Russia, Europe, USA and Japan, enthraling audiences wherever he goes. Of a recent concert in Mumbai, by the 78 year-old-maestro, the review next morning read: "Mumbai was transformed for the evening into a temple of music. The presiding deity being none other than music maestro Vistasp Balsara. It was a magical evening of melody and old memories." ■

[Excerpted from "Maestro Vistasp Balsara" by Jehangir D. Chaina, *Jame Jamshed*, January 31, 1999]



PANDIT KEKI S. JIJINA His life's mission is to propagate the divine art of Indian classical music

A classicist both by training and temperament, **Pandit Keki S. Jijina** has made it his life's mission to propagate the divine art of Indian classical music and has succeeded in taking to many hearts and homes.

Jijina founded the *Swar Sadhana Samiti* in 1961, with the aim to provide a forum for budding artistes and established musicians to perform.

A seasoned sitarist, he handles several other instruments with equal fluidity, control and confidence, having had advanced training under the all-time great Pandit Ravi Shankar.

For the last 50 years, he has molded hundreds of students at the Wadia Sangeet Class, including many foreigners. Among his many successful students are Aban Mistry, Murzban Karai, Rustom Sethna, Zavareh Sethna, Zarine Bana, Rupa Sethna and his son Sapal and grandchildren.

Examiner and judge at numerous music competitions, Jijina has traveled widely, lecturing and giving sitar recitals in UK, Europe, the Gulf and Africa. ■

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His solo album *Prem Etley Ke* has gained wide popularity and he anticipates the release of two more. The music rendition for his songs is undertaken by Kapadia himself, his forte being off-beat melodies and tunes based on classical ragas.

Realizing that Parsis, especially the community in Mumbai are into western music, Kapadia expresses his "dream to make Parsis learn to appreciate more Indian light classical music." "If they can speak in Gujarati," he muses, "why can't they appreciate music in Gujarati? ■

KERSI LORD

Noted Parsi musician, arranger and composer, **Kersi Lord**, has been in tremendous demand among Indian music composers of four generations.

*We choose our joys and sorrows
long before we experience them.*

- Khalil Gibran

A lifelong student of western classical music and jazz, Kersi has been the principal percussionist with the Bombay Chamber Orchestra and the Bombay Philharmonic. Also considered one of India's finest jazz drummers, his style of drumming incorporated Indian rhythms.

In 1973, barely three months after it was marketed in the USA, Lord introduced the Moog synthesizer to India. He also loved playing the accordion, and today, a song like Roop tera Mastaana has achieved immortality as much for its compositional and vocal merit as the strains of the accordion played by Kersi Lord. This new style of accordion playing became popular and was used in several songs later by S. D. and R. D. Burman.

PARVEZ J. KATRAK
Kirtankar



PENAAZ MASANI
First Indian ghazal song-
bird to win a gold disc



Penaaz was the first woman ghazal singer to have earned the distinction of winning a gold disc, for her bhajan recording of *Pooja ke Phool* she continues to work on two fresh releases each year, of bhajans and ghazals. With an entourage of musical accompaniments on the harmonium, tabla, sarangi/guitar, Penaaz is on tour often. [Excerpted from *Parisiana*, February 1988].



*"May we be among those who
renew the world"*

It is safe to say that this simple sentence outlines the purpose of life as defined by Zarathushtra. And it is safe to assume that Zarathushtrians and scholars of the religion unanimously embrace this concept of renovation. Therefore let us consider this as the ultimate goal of life and proceed from here. - By Shahriar Shahriari

NAVROZE HORMUSJI MEHTA Song-writer and singer

Navroze Hormusji Mehta sings bhajans, ghazals and light classical songs and plays the harmonium. He also has a flair for writing lyrics in Gujarati, Hindi and English and arranging music. Because of his love for North Indian music, he has come into contact with a number of classical music artistes and provides accompaniment to visiting vocalists. He has played the harmonium with the great *shenai* maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan and accompanied Parvez Katrak on tours.

Vice-chairman of the Musicians and Dramaticians Combined Society for 15 years, Mehta, a chartered accountant with Tata Electric, began his musical career with the Youth's Own Union.



ZEENIA MIRZA Hindi pop singer

Released in May 1997, then 12-year-old Zeenia Mirza's debut audio cassette and video track *Abhi Chhoti Hoon Main* which has aired on international TV channels including MTV, enjoyed sales "beyond expectations."

As a child star, Zeenia has been singing, dancing and acting on stage since the age of five, and has lent her voice for advertisement jingles. To

fine tune her voice, she takes training in Indian classical music.

With hard work and commitment, and support from her family and community, Zeenia, still a student at J. B. Vacha High School in Dadar, has set her sights on the spotlight, on a stage already crowded with entrenched and aspiring pop stars. ■

[From *Hitting the Right Note* by Hilla Guzder, *Parsiana*, September 1997]

ADI JAMSHEDJI MIRZA Writer of poems & ghazals

From early childhood Adi Jamshedji Mirza was interested in poetry. His first poem was published in *Kaiser-i-Hind* when he was ten years old. As a writer of ghazals, he has taken part in countless *mushairas* (poetry meets) and continues to receive invitations to recite his poetry, from prestigious institutions like the Indian National Theater, TV,

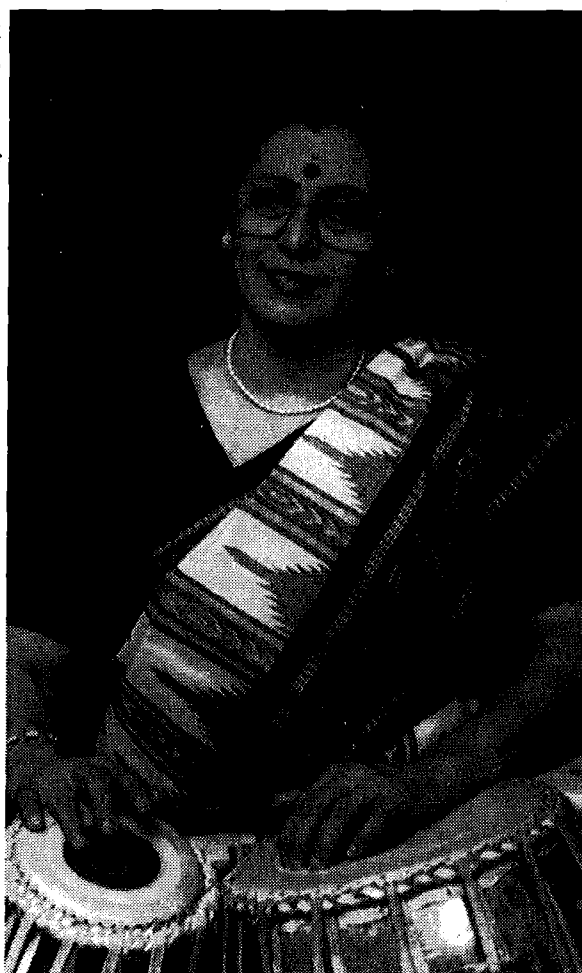
ABAN E. MISTRY First woman tabla maestro

Tabla maestro, musicologist and scholar, Aban E. Mistry began her debut into Indian classical music with singing at the tender age of four. By the age of 17, with grooming from renowned musicologists, this nubile prodigy had metamorphosed into a versatile musician astounding her audiences with her vocal, sitar and tabla recitals and became the first ever lady tabla solo player to be recorded and has been listed in the *Limca Book of Records* as the "First Woman Tabla Player."

Her diligence and sincerity culminated in Aban receiving the *Sangeet Visharad*, *Sangeet Alankar* and the prestigious *Sangeet Acharya* (Ph.D) degrees.

Aban has also cut a disc in *Sitar Jugalbandhi* with her guru Pandit Keki Jijina. He developed in her the penchant for percussion instruments and led her to master the intricacies of tabla under the legendary Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, who infused in her style the creative aspects of all the four gharanas.

Her creative genius, strength of character, incredible control over the *laya* along with the capability to produce exquisite tonal quality, led her to per-



form her tabla solo recitals all over India, Europe, Middle East and Russia. Affiliated with over 15 universities that invite her to conduct workshops, examine and guide Ph.D. students, she has contributed invaluable research articles in prestigious journals in India and abroad, and received numerous honors and awards. ■



Jaloo Bhesania and Kersi Mistry performing ballads from the Shah Nameh

KERSI MISTRY

Music director, solo instrumentalist

A self-made man, **Kersi Mistry** inherited his love and talent for music from his late father Phiroze Mistry, who was a gold-medalist from HMV for his records and music director of the first talkie film in India, Alamara.

Kersi started his musical career working as a pianist at HMV, then a giant name among recording companies. He served there as a staff artiste and music director for 40 years, and during that time, through sheer dint of hard work, raised himself to the stature of a well-respected music director, solo instrumentalist and accompanist.

He has cut several discs where he plays the piano, accordion, harmonium, solovox and other keyboard instruments. He has composed music for songs for HMV, as well as for several Hindi and Gujarati movies, working with legendary playback singers like Mohammed Rafi, Lata Mangeshkar and Talat Mahmood.

With his band and chorus group, Kersi has livened many a wedding and navjote function, and is also active at community celebrations such as *Avan roj nu parab*, when he entertains with monajats and popular songs, many composed by Kersi himself. He has also produced an audio cassette of popular and devotional Parsi songs. ■

*[FEZANA Journal gratefully acknowledges the time and effort put in by **Shenaz Munshi** [see profile on page 39] at short notice, in the midst of her busy schedule, to research and gather materials for this compilation. Regrettably, due to space constraints, much of the material had to be shortened and names of many noteworthy artistes omitted. Detailed information is available from Shenaz Munshi at 239A Tardeo Road, Mumbai 400 007, email: airyaman@hotmail.com]*

Maestro Mehli Mehta

**By Parastu (Mehta) Dubash
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts**

The name Mehta and conductors, the name Mehta and music, the name Mehta and India, and finally the name Mehta and the Parsi community have been a point of interest for music lovers all over the world for nearly 50 years. The name Mehli Mehta and classical music in India has been synonymous since the early 1940's and the name Mehta continues to spread internationally through Mehli's illustrious son, conductor Zubin Mehta. During the 1990 concert at the ancient Baths of Caracalla's near Rome, the name Mehta as in Zubin was taken to new heights by being televised live to an estimated 800 million viewers around the world. All this was due to a sequence of events that began some 70 years ago in a modest home at 21 Cuffe Parade, Colaba in Bombay India.

Mehli Mehta was born in 1908 in Bombay, the youngest of five brothers, whose middle class parents Nawrowji and Phiroja were liberal in outlook yet traditional in religious values. Mehli graduated from the University of Bombay and later from Trinity College of Music in London. From a young age Mehli's immense love of classical music prompted him to take the violin as an instrument of choice and later became one of the great violinists of his time in India.

Bombay Symphony Orchestra is born. Mehli founded the Bombay Symphony Orchestra in 1935 and was its concertmaster for the first ten years before becoming its conductor. He also founded the Bombay String Quartet in 1940, and was its leader and guiding spirit for 15 years. This was the time when his 15-year-old son Zubin started his early encounters with conducting in his "dad's"

The Illustrious Mehta Family

Patriarch music director and conductor **Maestro Mehli Mehta**; wife **Tehmina**, matriarch of the family, who has quietly orchestrated the careers of the Mehta men for the last 64 years; son **Zubin Mehta**, 'apro Zubin', internationally renowned music director and conductor; son **Zarin Mehta**, executive director; and all other members of the illustrious Mehta dynasty have brought luster and glory to the Zarathushti community.



The Mehtas in 1990: Mehli, Zubin, Tehmina and Zarin

orchestra. The Parsi community, in particular the Time & Talents Club of Bombay, with Mehli's support and zeal brought western music and culture to Indian audiences. World-renowned artists such as Yehudi Menuhin were among the many celebrities who made the long trip to India to play with the Bombay Symphony Orchestra during Mehli's

tenure. Many of the orchestra members were Parsis who either trained under Mehli or were encouraged to study orchestral music by the opportunities created by him.

During the period 1945-49, Mehli came to the United States to study and work under the expert guidance of Ivan Galamian, the celebrated violin tutor in New York. On his return,

Mehli sought to create a greater awareness for classical music by performing recitals and going on concert tours throughout India but was unable to inspire the general population to regularly attend and support the classical concert season. Rather, the audience's interest lay mainly in attending celebrity appearances. At this juncture, Mehli felt his career lay in the west and emigrated from India in 1955 with a heavy heart.

Move to UK and USA. Mehli became the concertmaster of the Halle Orchestra in Manchester, England under the baton of the great Maestro Sir John Barbirolli. He also played with that prestigious orchestra at the Edinburgh Festival for five consecutive years. Mehli's father Nawrowji joined his youngest son in Manchester at age 92. When asked by a reporter about his feelings at leaving his homeland for the first time, Nawrowji papa said he was tired of being lonely so was off to join his son; "At 92 one hardly likes leaving one's *desh* (homeland)." He passed away a year later in Manchester.

In 1959 Mehli returned to the US to join the world famous Curtis Quartet of Philadelphia, performing with them throughout the US for a period of five years. In 1964, Mehli was appointed to the music faculty of the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) as Director of the Orchestra Department and Conductor of the UCLA Symphony and Chamber Orchestra. He retired from this position as Conductor Emeritus in 1976.

Founding the American Youth Symphony. Soon after his arrival in Los Angeles, Mehli founded the American Youth Symphony (AYS) and became its Conductor and Music Director. He held this position for an astounding 33 seasons, until his retirement in 1998 at the age of 89. The AYS consists of 110 highly talented instrumentalists selected from universities across the US, between the ages of 18 and 25 years. During this time he created a dynamic orchestra of a truly professional stan-

PHOTO: ROBERT MILLAND

dard. Many of his musicians are now playing with major ensembles all over the world.

Musical career spanning seven decades. Mehli has earned accolades for his many guest-conducting engagements around the world including Europe, the Orient, South America, and throughout the United States. In recent years he has conducted the world famous Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as the symphony orchestras of Milwaukee, Miami, San Antonio, Florida, Puerto Rico, Montreal, Berlin, Venezuela, Brazil, and Israel. In 1983 Mehli made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall to unanimous high critical acclaim with the National Orchestra Association Symphony. A music center at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem is named after

Mehli and his son, Maestro Zubin Mehta. In 1983, Mehli took his AYS on a tour of Italy with great success.

Mehli's musical career has spanned 70 years including associations with world-renowned musicians such as Menuhin and Heifetz in the 1940's and 50's, Stern and Merrill in the 1960's, Perlman, Zukerman, and Barenboim in the 1970's, Hampson, Watts and Lynn Harrell in the 1980's, and Midori, Yo-Yo Ma, Vengerov, Bronfman, Ax, and Sarah Chang in the 1990's. Zubin Mehta has recently been quoted as saying: "there is nothing my father has not done in music repertoire; music is a way of life for him."

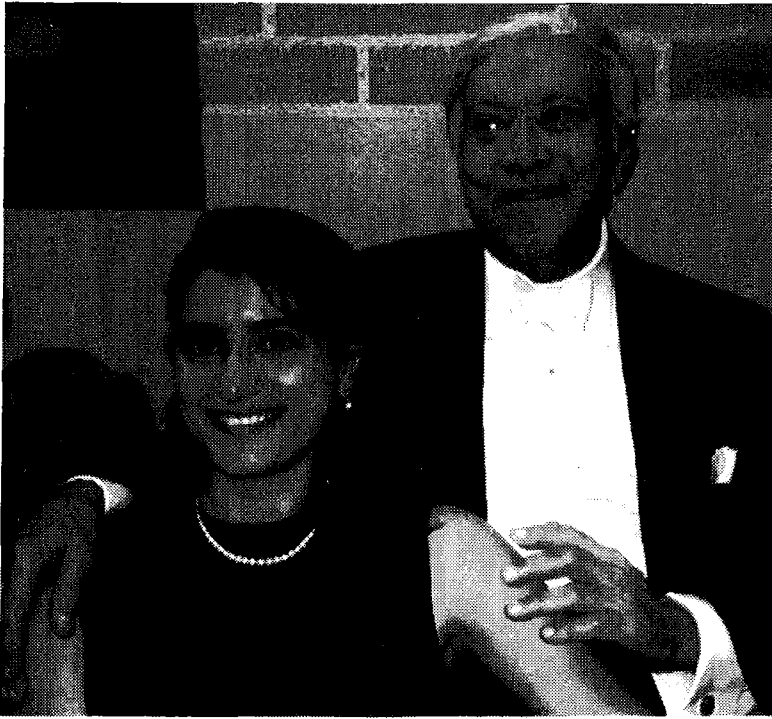
A documentary video was made in 1992, titled *Maestro Mehli Mehta and AYS*. In this video Mehli talks about composer Brahms as one his most favorite, due to the extraordi-

nary degree of lofty inspiration in Brahms' musical compositions. Mehli further states that a conductor has no business to come to the podium without knowing all his scores. He believes that when on the podium the conductor has to give 100% of his attention to the orchestra members by guiding them every step of the way. In order to accomplish this, Mehli spends endless hours studying the scores and interpreting the spirit of each composition. He is one of the few conductors who practices this extraordinary philosophy and it is no surprise that his son Zubin has followed his example by conducting everything from memory from the very beginning of his renowned career.

On March 7th 1999 a historical event took place at the Los Angeles Music



Mehta clan at the 60th wedding anniversary of Tehmina and Mehli Mehta in March 1995. Standing l to r, Mehli's grand-niece Parastu and her husband Jamshed Dubash of Boston, Gool and Mehli's nephew Shahrukh Mehta of Syracuse, Rustom (Zarin's son) of Vancouver, Sandra and Merwan (Zubin's daughter-in-law and son) of Chicago, Zubin's wife Nancy, Zubin, Zubin's daughter Zarina (Shenaya in hand) of Montreal, Zarin, Zarin's wife Carmen and daughter Rohanna of Chicago, and Shahrukh's son Kershaw. Sitting: Tehmina, Zarina's son Daniel and Mehli.



Mehli Mehta with the author, his grand-niece, Parastu (Mehta) Dubash, at Mehli's farewell concert in Los Angeles on May 16, 1998.

Center. Mehli, now Conductor Laureate, took to the podium once again, this time to celebrate the 34th anniversary of the American Youth Symphony (AYS) and his dream of conducting at age 90. The other highlights of the evening's program included Zubin Mehta at the podium – a rare union of the Mehta dynasty. Such a momentous event had occurred only once before some 20 years ago.

Family. Mehli's wife Tehmina, the Mehta family matriarch, who used to be Mehli's accompanist in the 1920's is truly the diamond that glitters quietly and without fanfare while giving light and luster to her husband, sons, and their families. She has orchestrated the careers of the Mehta men for the last 64 years and given them the encouragement and support that allows them creative fulfillment. Mehli's commitment to his family is an important part of his life. In spite of the distances and his very busy schedule he and Tehmina enjoy being with their four grandchildren and two great grandchildren immensely. Their younger son Zarin left his Chartered Accountant's career of some twenty years to become the Managing Director of the Montreal Symphony in 1982 and now heads

the Ravinia Festival (the summer home of Chicago Symphony Orchestra) as its chief executive director.

Nine members of the immediate Mehta family are accomplished professionals in the world of classical music and theater. Mehli's strong pioneering presence has undoubtedly been a guiding spirit. Would Zubin's extraordinary rise and success at a very young age have been possible without the opportunities provided by his visionary father?

Mehli's musical career in India, Europe, and North America has spanned almost seven decades and he continues to be active in his profession. Mehli Mehta is a legend in the classical music world. The chairperson of AYS in thanking Maestro Mehli Mehta for his continued contributions to AYS was quoted as saying. "Mehli is just not making music but making musicians of tomorrow." His legacy in the classical music world will surely continue through the many young musicians whose lives he has so deeply influenced ■

Dr. Parastu (Mehta) Dubash, *grand niece of Mehli Mehta, is president of ZAGBA and winner of FEZANA's Outstanding Young Zarathushti Award for 1998.*

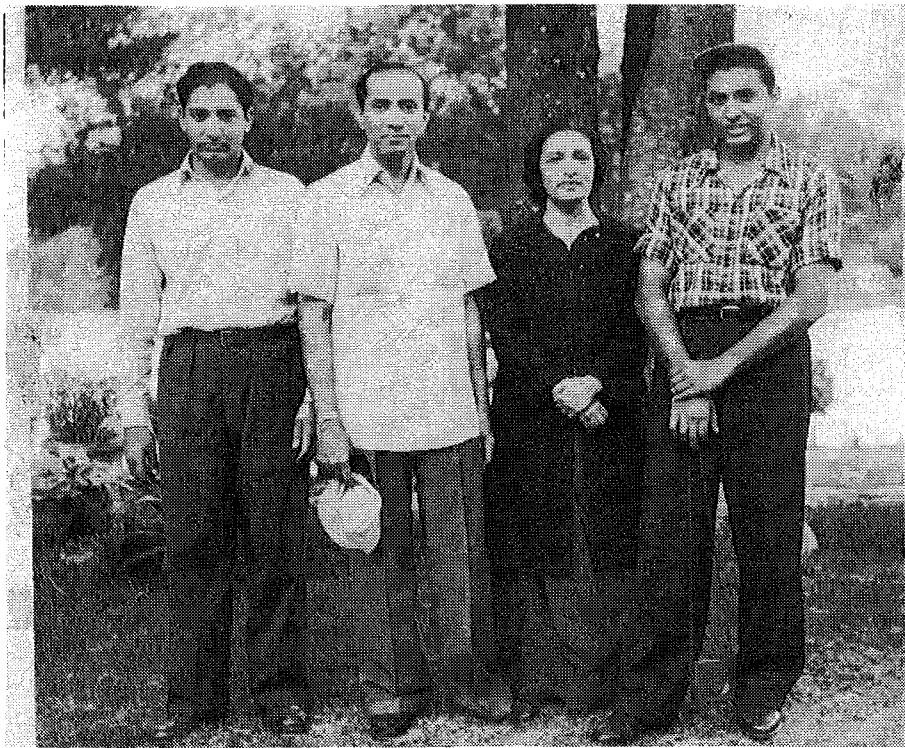
Zarin Mehta



Since 1990, Mehli Mehta's younger son Zarin has been the executive director and chief operating officer of Ravinia Festival, which offers more than 130 music and dance performances from June through September each year, and where the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is in residence during the summer. For the rest of the year, Mehta's office is busy producing all the "non-Chicago Symphony" concerts – jazz, pop, recitals – at Chicago's Orchestra Hall.

It is this super-busy year-round schedule, and the attendant social commitments (with "dinner engagements and business lunches 4 times a week") that prevents him from being more involved with the local Chicago Zarathushti community, "And besides," says Zarin, "the narrow-mindedness of some folks annoys me."

Innovations at Ravinia. Under Mehta's leadership, Ravinia has attracted new audiences and has inaugurated several new programs, including the innovative *Rising Stars* series, which introduces talented young musicians to Chicago audiences. Avant-garde and world music is explored every summer in Mehta's adventurous *Musica Viva* series, which offers national and international premieres. Mehta has also



Mehta family in Kodaikanal, India in 1954: Zarin, Mehli, Tehmina and Zubin.

expanded the Festival's series of Saturday morning children's concerts, and spearheaded numerous outreach community initiatives, including the Jazz in the Schools mentor program in the Chicago public schools. Consolidating and giving focus to the Festival's jazz programming, Mehta created *Jazz at Ravinia*, a concentrated annual series of jazz performances featuring many big names of the international jazz scene.

Early years. Born in Mumbai in 1938, and educated at Campion and later St. Mary's schools, Zarin left Mumbai at 16 for London to do his articles, barely a month after his brother, Zubin, at 18, left for Vienna. In 1962, after qualifying as a chartered accountant, he moved to Canada to join the international accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand. While a partner with that prestigious firm, he joined the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors and later became its vice president.

In 1981 Zarin was appointed managing director of the Montreal Symphony. During his tenure the orchestra's subscription base as well as its revenues markedly increased, as did its reputation as one of the

world's great symphonic ensembles. For his contributions to the orchestra and Montreal's cultural life, the Canadian government named Mehta a *Member of the Order of Canada*.

Through the years Mehta has garnered numerous other honors, among the most recent are the 1997 Arts Entrepreneurship Award from Chicago's Columbia College, the 1998 Dushkin Award from the Music Institute of Chicago, and an honorary doctorate from Chicago's Roosevelt University.

The Mehta clan. Zarin married Carmen Lasky (brother Zubin's erstwhile wife) in 1966 and they have two children. Daughter Rohanna, works in a consulting firm in Chicago and son Rustom lives in Whistler, a ski resort near Vancouver.

Besides his illustrious father Mehli and brother Zubin, several other members of the Mehta clan have carved a niche for themselves in the world of music or the theater. Zubin and Carmen's son **Merwan Mehta** works at the Ravinia Festival. **Xerxes Mehta**, son of Mehli's brother Jali, is founder and director of the Maryland Stage Company at the University of Maryland. **Dadi Mehta**, son of

**By Soozan Baxter
Manhattan, New York**

From Shirley Temple to Jody Foster, Hollywood has always loved child prodigies. When Zubin Mehta was appointed conductor of two major North American orchestras – the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra – at age 25, he was dubbed “Zubi Baby” in Tinseltown. Zoroastrians, marveling at the accomplishments of this renowned young man who was being celebrated worldwide for his gift, eagerly claimed, “Apro Zubin.”

Early dreams. Bombay-native Mehta was born in 1936 to violinist, orchestra conductor, and music professor Mehli and accompanying pianist Tehmina. His father urged him to take pre-medical courses, but Mehta dreamed of becoming a musician, next to his father. He had a keen memory and an impeccable ear; often he had a Brahms symphony running through his head. He studied violin and piano growing up and recognized that his strengths did not lie in instrument performance. Instead, Mehta wanted to become a conductor, something he first began desiring at age 11. The man whose name Zubin means powerful sword first picked up the baton five years after

another of Mehli's brothers, is a pianist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Dadi's son **Navi Mehta** plays the violin with the San Diego symphony, and another son, **Bejun Mehta** [see page 61] was recently proclaimed an “overnight sensation” as a countertenor with the New York City Opera. And Zarin's wife **Carmen** is a voice teacher at Northwestern University.

It is his mother, Tehmina, a pianist herself, whom Zarin credits for the Mehtas' success. “She kept us all together,” says Zarin, “while my father was totally consumed with his music, she was always there to support us.” — *By Roshan Rivetna*



Maestro Zubin Mehta - "apro Zubin"

that realization. At one Bombay Symphony rehearsal, his father relented to the 16-year-old's pleas to conduct. Said Bombay cellist George Lester to *Time* magazine in 1986, "He instantly took command, gave us our correct cues and put us under his spell." His fetal pig dissection days were clearly over.

Mehta enrolled at Vienna's prestigious Academy of Music at the age of 18. He absorbed everything the school had to offer: attending concerts, playing the bass in the school's orchestra, and studying conducting under Hans Swarowsky. Two years later, he organized and conducted a concert aiding the victims of the 1956 Hungarian revolution outside of Vienna. This effort was the first of many ways Mehta has used his music to bring awareness to political injustices throughout the world.

Marriage. Shortly after that, pretty Canadian voice student Carmen Lasky became his wife. The next few years were a whirlwind for the young couple. Mehta won first prize in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic competition for young conductors, became the assistant to the Musical Director of Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra as part of the prize, and fathered two children, Zarina and Merwan. The torrid pace at which he worked paid off. In 1961, he was named the music director of the Montreal Symphony where he stayed until 1967, and in 1962, he was appointed the musical director with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, where he stayed until 1978.

But Mehta's fervent devotion to music meant that he was neglecting his marriage that was falling apart. He relied on his younger brother Zarin to occasionally check up on his

wife, and a few years later, Mehta dedicated a concert to his brother who was "getting married to a very nice girl" – Carmen.

Mehta began to make the social rounds in Los Angeles and was rarely seen without a beautiful woman next to him. Soprano singer Teresa Stratas was his only serious girlfriend between Carmen and his second wife Nancy (Kovack), a movie actress, whom he later married in 1968.

While it may have seemed to the celebrity circles that Mehta's only other interest besides music was girls, it was untrue. He revolutionized the Montreal orchestra, taking them on tour to Russia, which was their first tour outside of Canada. But he also revolutionized the role of the conductor who is heard only when making music. While touring he spoke out against the police states, urging fans to revolt. In California,

he conducted a volunteer orchestra during anti-Vietnam peace movements on college campuses.

Around this time, the South African government extended Mehta many invitations to perform within its country, but he refused in protest of its apartheid policies. In 1967 and 1973, Mehta held concerts for soldiers on the front lines during the Arab-Israeli wars. And in 1991, he cancelled his New York Philharmonic performances so he could conduct the Israel Symphony Orchestra, which was performing in an effort to boost the morale of the Israelis.

The Israeli connection. Mehta's love of Israel and all things Jewish dates back to when he first conducted the orchestra in 1961. He was appointed its music director in 1969 and the appointment was extended for life in 1981. His relationship with the orchestra is unlike any other conductor's. Mehta has remarked in the past that the members of that symphony are constantly evaluating practices and performances, speaking out their opinion when they don't agree in all different languages. In 1978, he told *Newsweek*, "Sometimes I feel I'm not the conductor but the referee." Mehta can understand many of the gripes, speaking seven languages himself, but surprisingly, not Hebrew.

This referee often manages to coerce his orchestra members into doing what may seem like the impossible, but Mehta may view as cathartic. One example, reported by *Time* in 1968 when Mehta graced its cover as no Zoroastrian had done before or has done since, was when he unsuccessfully tried to get his Israeli orchestra to perform a piece by Richard Wagner, whose music was loved by Adolf Hitler and, therefore, disturbs many Jews. Another instance occurred at the Berlin Festival in 1971 when the orchestra opened playing Mahler's First, rather than the German anthem *Deutschland Uber Alles*, which would have

been unthinkable for the predominantly Jewish Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. According to a 1978 *Newsweek* cover story on Mehta, the audience responded with an almost hysterical ovation, as if they were asking the predominantly Jewish ensemble for forgiveness. And in turn, Mehta conducted the Israeli national anthem *Hatikvah*, and his

“One moment you see Zubin talking with Kings, Princes and Presidents and the next time you see him joking with the hotel concierge. That's our Zubin.”

orchestra stood, tears running down their face, as they played it.

His sheer love and compassion for the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the reasons Mehta is revered in this Middle Eastern country and has received the highest praises by Israel, including being named an Honorary Citizen of Tel Aviv, the only non-Israeli to ever earn this award. Shortly before Prime Minister Golda Meir's death in December 1978, she said, "It's heartwarming to see a man like Zubin Mehta become so attached to Israel. He has never failed us. Whenever there is war and the country is in danger, he appears, regardless of his other commitments. For us it's an extremely emotional experience."

New York Philharmonic. While the man who has made more than 500 recordings with leading orchestras and artists worldwide may seem to be God-like, he has made mistakes over the years. Consider his remarks in the late 1960s, for example, when it was rumored that he would become Leonard Bernstein's successor as conductor of the New York Philharmonic: "Artistically it would not be a step up for me. My orchestra is better than the New York Philharmonic." Ten years later, he probably wished he could eat his words – spiced with chili peppers, the only way he will eat food, no doubt – when he was appointed music direc-

tor and conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

His appointment lasted 13 years, the longest term ever in the history of the United States' oldest orchestra, performing more than 1,000 concerts with them. During that time, his achievements were extraordinary: concert tours journeyed to Latin America, Europe and Asia; a July 5, 1986 concert celebrating the Statue of Liberty Centennial was recognized in the 1987 Guinness Book of World Records for its "Greatest Classical Music Concert Attendance" with 800,000 listeners on the lawns of Cen-

tral Park; and a 1988 trip to the former Soviet Union culminated in a joint concert with the State Symphony Orchestra of the Soviet Ministry of Culture in Moscow's Gorky Park.

Quirks. With all of the accomplishments comes a bit of quirkiness that might overwhelm and confuse the common man. Mehta leads the life of a gypsy, having spent a good portion of the last 40 years – before such jet-set lifestyles were common among celebrities – on airplanes and in hotel rooms. He even knows two to three years in advance where he will be performing on any given day.

Yet, no matter where Mehta is, he manages to keep abreast of all the cricket test matches. He knows all the sport's top players in the world, many of them personally, and he attends cricket matches whenever possible. He has even been known to watch televised matches from his stage dressing rooms.

Besides being able to spurt off cricket facts like a walking encyclopedia, Mehta also loves sharing his own variation of recipes with some of the most renowned chefs worldwide. A lover of all things spicy, he totes bottles of Tabasco sauce with him, dashing it on everything except chocolate desserts and ice cream. Fortunately, Sirio Maccioni of New York's *Le Cirque 2000* fame now

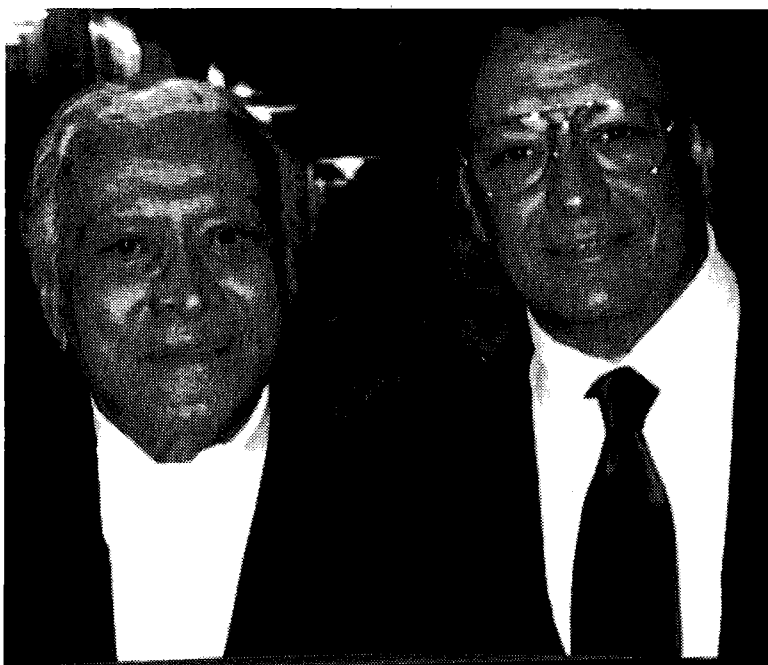
knows to keep a jar of dried chili peppers at his restaurant and his home in Italy in case the music maker happens to dine with him.

Mehta's penchant for hot food has rubbed off on many of his friends, including Barbara Sinatra, Gregory Peck, and King Juan Carlos of Spain, to all of whom he has given chili peppers from his Los Angeles garden. Still not all hot-food lovers can manage to keep up with the fire eater, as Jamsheed K. A. Marker, who used to be Pakistan's delegate to the United Nations, once told the New York Times.

After leaving the New York Philharmonic, Mehta focused more on conducting opera, and his legendary achievements continued. He made a four-year commitment conducting Wagner's monumental *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle (four nights spread over a six-day marathon performance) with the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1992 until 1996. On one occasion, between the second and third acts of this three-act performance, he asked a big Swedish singer to give him a massage because he wasn't sure he would be able to continue.

Needless to say, this is a man with strong endurance and powerful shoulders and arms that can't even fit in off-the-rack jackets. Made-to-order clothes from the United States, Italy and England fill his closets all over the world, which are mainly comprised of the concert uniform of tuxedos and tails, as well as Indian Kurta shirts. Good thing that Mehta has plenty of clothes to rely on, as this conductor who performs all his symphonic scores from memory and is known for using eye contact to convey a message to his orchestra members rather than flailing his arms aimlessly, has an affinity toward splitting his seams.

Accolades. And when you have the largest viewing audience, as was the case when he, along with Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras, performed the *Three Tenors Concert* in 1990, you want to look and sound perfect for the estimated 800 million TV viewers tuning in for the spectacular event. (This concert album went on to receive an Emmy Award, the first time the award had ever been given for a classical concert.) Four years later,



The two maestros: Mehli and Zubin

1.3 billion people watched a reunion concert, which took place at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, California.

In March this year, Zubin was invited to conduct the Israel Philharmonic at a £10,000 per couple charity concert for Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace; a signal honor, indeed, for never has an English orchestra or an English conductor ever conducted in the Palace before. The next day, the Queen, who was not at the Buckingham Palace event, invited guests, with an additional £5,000 donation per couple, to Windsor Castle. As the Israeli Orchestra manager said: "One moment you see Zubin talking with Kings, Princes and Presidents and the next time you see him joking with the hotel concierge. That's our Zubin."

The man who was once named one of Dr. Ruth's "Ten Sexiest Hunks", along side Don Johnson and Tom Selleck, has racked up numerous awards over the years, including the Albert Einstein Award from American Technion Society for being a 20th century Renaissance man, the Hans Von Bulow medal by the Berlin Philharmonic, India's Padma Bushan (Order of the Lotus) medal and scroll, the Vienna Philharmonic Ring of Honor, and many honorary doctorate degrees.

The true testimony, however, comes from the people who are his colleagues and friends. "I have seldom encountered a more noble human being, one whose intelligence and self-assurance enable him to overcome so many difficulties in life," wrote Daniel Barenboim, in the playbill for Mehta's farewell performance as music director for the New York Philharmonic in 1991. Other testimony came from Itzhak Perlman, Isaac Stern, and Beverly Sills, whose message said, "It's a combina-

tion of a great talent, a feeling of excitement that is contagious, and a warmth that makes you want to know more about that person. That's my Zubin."

And that's 'Apro Zubin', our Zubin the conductor and the Zoroastrian. ■

[Additional reporting by Sharokh Mehta]. **Soozan Baxter** is the Weddings, Travel and Home & Garden editor at barnesandnoble.com and regularly freelances for MainX-change.com. Baxter obtained her BA from Barnard College, Columbia University in 1997 and her MS from Columbia University School of Journalism in 1998. She is the daughter of Thrilee and the late Darius Baxter of Manlius, New York, and currently lives in New York.

ROXANA ANKLESARIA
Private music studio

In 1993, Roxana Anklesaria established a private music studio in Vancouver, BC, where she teaches piano, music theory, harmony and history for the various examination systems. A teaching member of the Music Teachers National Association, she is often called upon to be an adjudicator for music festivals in the Vancouver area.

Actively involved in promoting piano pedagogy to Vancouver area teachers, Roxana is founder and convener of the BC Registered Music Teachers' Association's annual International Piano Masterclass and Workshop series, bringing prominent pedagogues to the city.

Roxana had initial musical training in India with the Trinity College of Music (London). Following graduation with a B. Music degree from the University of British Columbia, in 1985, Roxana returned to India and established a private music studio in Pune, until her establishment of the same in BC in 1993. ■

NEVILLE AUSTIN
pianist & percussionist

Neville Austin of Toronto started playing the piano at the age of 5 and has won a number of medals in various piano competitions. At high school, he played the clarinet as well. He went on to pursue further musical studies at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, graduating with a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Arts in Musicology in 1984.

Subsequently, deciding to follow a different career path, Neville studied at the prestigious Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto. He is presently working as a lawyer, but music continues to be an important part of his life, occasionally giving informal recitals for friends. Most recently, he made a cameo appearance as a percussionist with the Counterpoint Community Orchestra, an amateur group in Toronto. ■

Zarathushtis in Western Classical Music

Honoring the achievements of the many, both budding and seasoned Zarathushtis who have carved a niche for themselves on the Western classical music scene.



SONIA BEHRANA
Classical singer

Sonia Behrana of Houston, Texas, started singing at 14, and went to the High School for the Performing Arts, performing often in events and recitals. She continued her music studies on a scholarship for two years, then changed her major and went on to receive her Masters degree in International Relations. She is currently at Thurgood Marshall School of Law and working in the US District Court. However, she continues to maintain her love of music and enjoys singing and entertaining. ■

FARHAD BILLIMORIA
Violin virtuoso

Farhad Billimoria, currently pursuing postgraduate studies in Vienna and a member of Vienna's Tonkuenstler Chamber Orchestra, was born in 1971 in Mumbai, into a musical family (parents Bomi and Anita are both accomplished pianists, and sister Dilshad a noted flautist) and commenced his training under Jimi Dinshaw.

From an early age, his exceptional talent impressed several international musicians during their visits to India. In 1988, he was selected by Walter Verdehr as one of ten recipients chosen worldwide, to study under him at Michigan State University, for which he was awarded the highest scholarship given to any undergraduate student. "He is a person of exceptional talent, dedication and discipline ... an outstanding performer ...", said Verdehr, "he will become an exceptionally fine professional musician." This gave him the opportunity to prove his capabilities and, due to his leadership qualities, he very soon earned the position of Concertmaster of the University Symphony Orchestra. In 1993, he graduated with distinction in Violin Performance.

Following his substantial achievements in so short a period in the USA, Farhad moved on to Europe to pursue his further musical development. "When a beautiful note is created with a bow," points out Farhad, "the listener may just marvel at the sound, but the player needs to learn a



Clockwise from top, Roxana Anklesaria (piano pedagogy), Neville Austin (pianist), Farhad Billimoria (violinist) and Sonia Behrana (singer) at the gala banquet for the opening of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston.



hundred things before he acquires that ability."

In Vienna he studied with Bijan Khadem-Missagh (who said of him: "an outstanding violinist ... one of the most sensitive musicians of his generation...") and Klaus Peistener of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Farhad has participated in several masterclasses held by world renowned musicians including Joseph Fuchs (Juillard School of Music), Pinchas Zukerman, Rugiero Ricci (who called him an "exceptionally talented violinist") Dorothy Delay, Mstislav Rostropovich and Herman Krebbers.

In 1993 he was prize-winner of the International Chamber Music Festival Austria. As a result of his musical diversity, Farhad has already performed as recitalist, soloist with orchestra and chamber musician in several countries including USA, Germany, Monaco, Austria and India. One summer he played at a special open-air concert before an audience of 10,000, when the renowned José Carreras "electrified the atmosphere". and is regularly invited to perform at Sangat, the only Western classical music festival in India, under the patronage of Zubin Mehta. ■

DILSHAD BILLIMORIA Flautist of note

Farhad's sister, **Dilshad Billimoria**, an accomplished flautist, is a Masters degree student at the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music in Pittsburgh, under Jeanne Baxtresser, the retired Principal Flute of the New York Philharmonic.

Essentially a self-taught flautist (since there are no recognized teachers in India) Bombay-born Dilshad started her musical studies on the piano at four. Shortly after completing her schooling (at J. B. Petit), a visiting conductor convinced her to do the five-year degree course in music



Left, flautist
Dilshad
Billimoria,

Facing page,
clockwise, violin-
ist Jini Dinshaw;
Farobag Cooper
conducting the
Chicago Philhar-
monia; Farobag's
sister, Piroozi
Cooper, exponent
of the oboe and
English Horn,
with son Cyrus,
who has com-
pleted the
"Kindermusik"
program and
begun to study
the piano.

from the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London. So, at 18, Dilshad left for London. The RCM gave her a four-year scholarship and awarded her the Senior Flute Prize among other prizes and medals. She performed regularly as Principal Flute of the RCM Symphony, as also the London Ensemble and the National Youth Ballet Orchestra. In 1996 she graduated with a Bachelors in Music (Honours) and a year later, completed her postgraduate diploma in orchestral performance.

Among her most exciting performances was playing under Sir George Solti and her flute solo at the Commonwealth Observance Service in London's Westminster Abbey, in the presence of the Queen and Prince Charles, in 1994. When she was presented to Her Majesty, the Queen remarked that her "music was beautiful." Prince Charles enquired of Dilshad whether she was a professional and added, "I hope we didn't terrify you too much."

Dilshad finds living abroad "more fulfilling" and feels it "offers more

opportunities." Getting set for her graduation this year from Carnegie Mellon, the 25-year-old Dilshad is excited: "I'll start off freelancing. Teach. Audition for orchestras. Get imaginative." Whether she will join a chamber music group or an orchestra is uncertain. "Personally, she loves the feeling of playing in a big orchestra, especially if I'm sitting principal, but vacancies are few, for once you're taken on by an orchestra, you tend not to leave until you're about 60!" ■

FAROBAG HOMI COOPER **Conductor and pianist**



Music Director of the *Chicago Philharmonia* [photo page 57] since 1985, **Farobag Homi Cooper** has been the Artistic Director of the University of Chicago's Professional Instrumental Music Series (PRISM) since 1990 and principal conductor of its three resident ensembles, the *Mostly Mozart Chamber Players*, *Camerata Virtuosi* and the *Baroque Masterplayers* whose members are drawn largely from the Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Cooper has performed on the piano at Carnegie Recital Hall and participated as a chorus member in over 100 performances with the New York Metropolitan Opera. He was accepted as a scholarship student in violin at the Manhattan School of Music and, in 1975, continued studies in piano, theory and conducting at the Eastman School of Music while simultaneously enrolled at the University of Rochester as a degree candidate in mathematics and philosophy.

In addition to the symphonic repertoire, Farobag is also a skilled interpreter of Baroque literature. As



music advisor to the ten-member *Baroque Masterplayers*, Cooper's stylistic renditions concatenate period performance techniques with modern instruments creating a unique voice within the realm of 17th and 18th century repertoire. Music of the 20th century has been highlighted through the PRISM Series' Composer-in-Residence program. The Illinois Bureau of Tourism has also featured Cooper and the *Cammerati Virtuosi* through TV commercials that have aired throughout North America. Cooper has recently produced a video tape of the Chicago Philharmonia in a performance of Brahms (Hungarian Dances), Dvorak, Bach and more.

A proficient composer, Cooper has arranged music for a number of Zarathushti songs, including *Chaiye Hame Zarathushti* [see page 5].

Befitting his penchant for multitasking, Cooper is pursuing advanced studies in Higher Education Administration at the University of Chicago, and obtaining some of the most prestigious designations in the financial services industry, e.g. Chartered Financial Consultant. He is a Registered Investment Advisor in 3 states. ■

PIROOZI COOPER

Oboe and English Horn

Born in New York City, **Pirootzi Cooper** [photo right] of New Haven,

Connecticut, sister of Farobag Cooper began her musical studies at the age of seven on the piano and started performing on the oboe during her high school years. While in high school, she performed with the All-State orchestra and was a national merit finalist. She continued her post secondary studies at the Manhattan School of Music and received her Bachelors of Music in Oboe/English Horn performance in 1988. Her instructors have included noted Oboe and English Horn players: Thomas Stacy of the New York Philharmonic, Robert Bloom (of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Mark Hill of the New York Chamber Symphony.

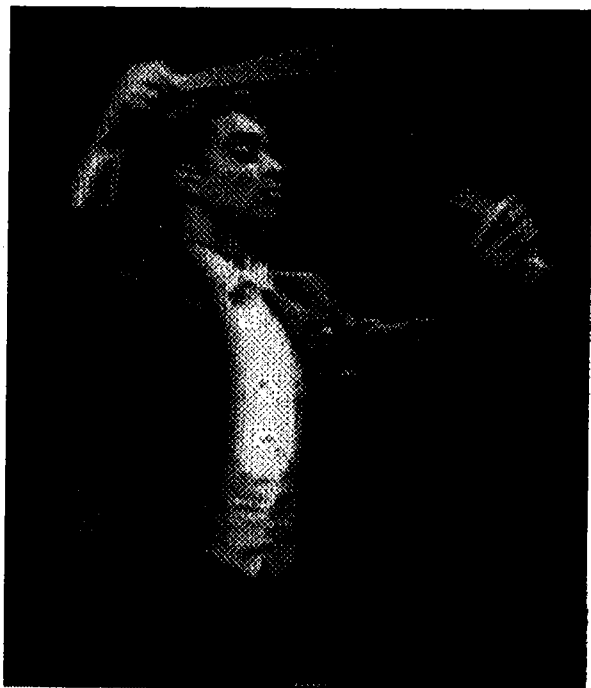
Pirootzi has performed at several venues embracing both the orchestral and chamber repertoire, including the New York Chamber Society, the Garden State Philharmonic, and the New England Opera Orchestra, while chamber music performances have been presented at Lincoln Center and the Juilliard School of Music.

A certified instructor in Montessori education and *Kindermusik* (an internationally recognized program for children from newborn to seven years) Pirootzi has over 200 students under her tutelage.

Her experience in motivating children led her to form the ZAGNY



Philharmonic which performed to a standing ovation at the North American Zoroastrian Congress in July 1998, featuring arrangements of Zarathushti songs and other works. ■



Left, conductor Zane Dalal. Above, At a performance of the opera Ahura, from left: composer Meher Madon-Jansen, soprano Pervin Damania, soprano Freny Dalal-Paghdiwala, bass Dadi Darbary, tenor Godfrey Andrews and conductor Parvez Doctor.

ZANE DALAL

Music Director/Conductor

One of the rising stars among the world's great conductors, **Zane Dalal** is captivating audiences world wide. Born (in 1965) and educated in England, Zane holds Masters degrees in Music from Oxford (where he was awarded an Organ scholarship and held the position of Choirmaster and Organist) and Indiana University.

Dalal made his debut in Orchestral Conducting in the US at Indiana University, where he became one of their most distinguished conducting students, performing a wide range of new works, concerti and symphonic repertoire. In 1989 Dalal attended coachings under the auspices of Maestro Daniel Barenboim and Wolfgang Wagner. He has also participated in several music festivals and competitions including international competitions in Besancon and Lugano, placing as finalist in both.

From 1991 to 1993 Dalal was Music Director of the University of Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra and Conductor of the University Opera Theater. He has also conducted concerts with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic and Mehli Mehta's American Youth Symphony in Los Angeles.

In 1994, Zane led the Utah Symphony Orchestra in a special gala concert for the Lord Mayor of London, launching the St. Paul's Cathedral Appeal Fund in the USA. His compact disc recording with the same orchestra, that traverses both pops and classical repertoire has been hailed as a breakthrough in recording technology.

In 1995, Zane competed in the prestigious First Leonard Bernstein Jerusalem International Conductors Competition. Of a starting field of 233, he was one of seventeen international candidates invited to conduct in Jerusalem. Of three candidates advanced to that stage from the USA, Dalal was the sole winner of the competition held in Tanglewood. In 1996, he spent much of the summer at the Ravinia Festival by invitation of Maestro Cristoph Eschenbach. Through the 1997-1998 season, Zane was invited to assist with the Dallas Symphony acting as cover conductor for selected concerts with Maestro Andrew Litton and guest conductors.

Dalal, son of Phiroze and Dhunmai of Los Angeles, is certainly, in the words of Zubin Mehta "an extremely gifted conductor ... on the verge of embarking on a good career." ■



PARVEZ DOCTOR

Conductor-Soloist

Conductor, soloist and founder of the Bombay Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestra and the Bombay School of Music, **Parvez Doctor** [photo p. 38] studied violin, viola and conducting with a number of prominent teachers.

In 1986, Parvez represented the Delhi Symphony Orchestra in the World Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Lorin Maazel in Rio de Janeiro – an orchestra made up entirely of leader soloists from around the world. He availed of a fellowship (courtesy of the British Council) to study and improve upon professional work in India by observing principal orchestras in London. Doctor has performed in several classical orchestras and chamber music groups in India and was a member of the *Mazda Trio* with **Silloo Panthaki** and **Tehmie Gazdar**.

Most of Mumbai's young concerto soloists in the past three decades have had their first opportunity to perform with an orchestra under the baton of Parvez Doctor. In his varied concerts, Parvez has also featured several established choirs and on occasion, conducted them with orchestra. Providing a platform for premiere performances was a regular feature and

With the assistance of co-Director **Bepsy Marzban**, Parvez conducts weekly orchestra classes (free of charge) and organizes children's concerts, demonstrations in schools and orchestral experience and public exposure to budding talent. [By *Shenaz Munshi*].



PHOTO: PARSIANA, SEPTEMBER 1991



PHOTO: PARSIANA, MARCH 1997

From left, conductor Cyrus Ginwala, late pianist Hilla Khurshedji, vocalist Dilshad Khambatta.

Hongkong has performed at concerts and oratorios in Salzburg, India and Hongkong. She studied music on a scholarship from the Goethe Institute at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. As a member of the Salzburger Dom Chor, she toured USA, Canada and Europe.

A soloist at the Paranjoti Academy Chorus of Bombay, she had accompanied them on their tour of Japan, USA, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. ■

HILLA KHURSHEDJI Concert pianist

In 1983, the death of noted concert pianist **Hilla Khursedji**, at the height of her career, stunned the music world.

Her memory is perpetuated by the Hilla Khursedji Memorial Trust set up to encourage budding musicians. A Memorial Trophy and Award were donated by the Trust to the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in London.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Khursedji stood first in the 1975 Royal Overseas League Music Festival and was nominated "Young Musician of the Year 1978" by the Greater London Arts Association.

Khursedji's last concert performance was at the Tata Theatre in Bombay. [From Parsiana, March 1985]. ■

MEHER MADON-JANSEN Composer-conductor

A gifted and versatile musician, **Meher Madon-Jansen**, a composer of choral and orchestral works, also played the violin, orchestral drums and timpani in the Bombay Chamber Orchestra (becoming probably the first woman timpanist in a symphony orchestra in India).

In 1973, Meher pursued musical studies on a scholarship at the Carl Orff Institut in Salzburg, and subsequently promoted the *Orff Schulwerk* system of introducing music to children using xylophones and percussion instruments, in Bombay.

For a time, Meher was Associate Conductor of the B. P. Chamber Orchestra formed by Parvez Doctor, and later held the position of Musical Director for the Cantata Choir.

While she enjoys working with both orchestra and choir, Meher's first love is musical composition. Her compositions range from serious works to light pieces and are written in varied styles, both classical and modern. Two of her orchestral works – *Schulwerk* and *Salzburg*, combining orchestral instruments with xylophones and percussion, have been accepted into the Music Library at the Orff Institut.

The most acclaimed of her compositions is the oratorio *Ahura*, [see

photo p. 58] fulfillment of a life-long dream, which premiered in Mumbai in 1994 with a special choir of 34 singers and a 30-member orchestra.

Ahura is probably the first choral work set to Avestan words. In style both classical and contemporary, the work is in six movements. The *Ashem Vohu*, *Ahunavar* and *Fravarane* prayer are rendered as classical hymns and soprano arias, followed by the *Tandarosti* sung in a style reminiscent of a mobed chanting. The 45-minute oratorio culminates in a glorious climax with a 4-part fugue for voices on the words "Ahura Mazda."

Meher's latest project, in collaboration with Dr. Homi Dhallia, is to set verses from the Gathas of Zarathushtra to music. With her creative genius, Meher is composing musical settings for selected verses, taking into consideration the rhythm and cadence of the sacred text. The composition, for solo voice and piano, will, according to Meher soon "come alive in sound". ■

TRETA MCCRELESS Singer

Treta McCreless, is a 1997 graduate of Southwest Texas University, with a bachelor's degree in performing arts, with a major in Vocal Performance. Treta is a soprano and sings opera in several languages. She has

performed roles in SWT productions of South Pacific, Guys and Dolls, Faust and others. A versatile performer, she also enjoys singing pop and country and western, and even knows a few songs in Farsi.

Discovered by her high school music teacher, Treta is naturally gifted and as a child, always sang and loved music and dancing. While music is not her profession (she has an administrative job in a medical supply company) Treta is often invited to perform at functions, and is an especially welcome guest at functions of the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas, of which mom Mitra Valatabar is President. ■

BEJUN MEHTA Countertenor

Billed as an "overnight sensation" in the Arts & Entertainment (A&E) preview of February 1999 and in reviews in Time, New York Times and other major publications, Bejun Mehta's career as a countertenor (an adult male voice higher than that of a tenor), has suddenly taken a sharp turn upwards.

Mehta, a grandson of Mehli Mehta's brother, has sung as long as he can remember. When his brilliant career as a boy soprano ended in 1983, he had struggled to remake himself as an adult singer. It was in 1997, when he took flight as a countertenor, that his primal connection to music suddenly returned. He was then singing Handel in downtown Manhattan and the New York City Opera, "blowing listeners away with his fluency, power and emotional abandon."

A European tour has taken Mehta to London and Vienna, where he celebrated his first anniversary as a countertenor. "When countertenors first came along, they got jobs if they had the notes," says Mehta, "then people started demanding style, range, dynamic control, depth — all the things they demand of regular singers." And, from all indications, Bejun Mehta appears to be giving them what they want. ■

RATTI MEHTA Pianist

Ratti Jal Mehta began her musical career in Bombay under Olga Craen, obtaining the Performer's Diplomas of the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity College. Recognition of her talent followed quickly and she received a scholarship for having stood first in India in the LRSM Performers Diploma. She then topped the list as Licentiate of the Trinity College, London, and, at 22, was the youngest soloist to perform in the Bombay Symphony Orchestra.

She trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London, winning a number of medals and a 4-year scholarship. She performed at the International Concert in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1951 and 1953 (the first Indian to do so), and appeared on the BBC Overseas Service and in concerts and recitals.

The umbilical cord drew her back to India, and she soon became chairperson of the Time & Talents Club in 1957, steering that committee until 1993. During her tenure, Ratti organized some of the finest Western musical concerts for Bombay audiences, and soon rose to be President. She has done her Club, country and community proud with her musical talents and service to western music in India. [From *Parsi Tari Arsi*, *Mumbai Samachar*, January 24, 1999]. ■

PARVEZ MODI Pianist

For **Parvez Mody**, an accomplished concert pianist, accompanist and professor of piano, the decision to make a career as a pianist was reached one day after he heard a recording of *Chopin Études*. "God knows how many times I played that record," he

From top, composer Meher Madon-Jansen, "overnight sensation" countertenor Bejun Mehta and singer Treta McCreless.





PHOTO: PARSIANA



PHOTO: PARSIANA



From left, concert pianists Ratti Mehta, Khurshed Rastomji and Michel Romy Vachha.

said in an interview with Parsiana, "That was the turning point for me."

His pursuit of a profession in music took him to Moscow, from where he earned a master's degree in fine arts and got a full scholarship for seven years to study the piano extensively.

After specializing in piano performance, accompaniment and pedagogy, he returned to India in 1994. The following year, he was one of six musicians selected, from a field of 56 who had auditioned, to do his doctoral studies at the Karlsruhe Conservatoire of Music in Germany.

A familiar figure at concerts in Russia and India, Mody puts in a 8 hours of practice a day in preparation for a concert. "For," says Mody, quoting the Russian composer Rachmaninoff, "The first day I don't practice, I know. the second day I don't practice, my friends know, and the third day I don't practice, everybody knows." [From *parsiana*, August 1996].

SILLOO PANTHAKI

Teacher and violinist

Prominent teacher and violinist of chamber orchestral music in India, **Silloo Panthaki**, trained with Gool Tata in Mumbai and Monica Langham at Dastur School in Poona. Winning the coveted scholarship at her LRSM examination, she studied

violin and chamber music at the Royal College of Music, London. She taught in London, gave several broadcasts over BBC and played for troops during the war. On return to India she established herself as a leading musician, and teaches at the Bombay School of Music. [From *Shenaz Munshi*]

KHURSHED RASTOMJI

Pianist

Born in Pune, India, pianist **Khurshed Rastomji** "began banging away at the piano at four". Following training with Olga Craen in India, the USA-based Rastomji has masters degrees from the University of Connecticut in Piano and music history and a diploma from the Royal Schools of Music, London.

He gives lecture-recitals regularly, often under the sponsorship of the Connecticut Humanities Council as

when he presented Brahms' later piano music for the Brahms Sesquicentennial. [Parsiana, March 1987].

MICHEL RUMY VACHHA

Pianist

Michel Romy Vaccha is the first pianist from India to successfully complete the post-graduate course at Rome's Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia. He won an open scholarship in 1977 to study under the celebrated concert-pianist Marcella Crudeli, attended masters classes at the University of Zurich and holds the coveted LRSM performers Diploma.

Vachha has given recitals in Italy and India and on Italian radio and TV. He holds professorships with music institutes in Italy and France. [From *Parsiana*, January 1986].



DINYAR VANIA Opera Singer

Dinyar Vania was 4 years old when he started clanking on the piano keys. Family friend Hira Poncha used to give him "five-minute" lessons. This was his first introduction to music.

After four piano teachers and 10 years of studying the ivory keys, Vania's parents reluctantly let the finicky teenager, who wanted to play anything but classical music, quit. "I hated it. I couldn't stand piano a minute more," remembered Vania, who is from Marcellus, New York. But he was not leaving music entirely behind him. Along the way, he had begun to play the drums in the fourth grade school band which he really enjoyed.

Percussion, along with football, began to consume most of Vania's high school life. Little did he know that another instrument would be propelling him to his future career — singing. In fact his voice was discovered mostly by chance. Having resigned himself to be a singer in the shower and car only, he was mortified when his sister Persis, who acts as Vania's unofficial agent, told one of Vania's friends that she wanted him to try out for a high school musical. When the 17-year-old Vania grudgingly auditioned for *Pirates of Penzance*, the director told him that he had sung his way to the starring role of the Pirate King.

From then, his singing career spiralled. He started

taking private voice lessons and was told by his teacher that after six months of hard work he would be ready to audition as a baritone at a major university.

Unsure at first, by the end of the school year, Vania knew that he wanted to become an opera singer. His father, Jehangoo

Vania, not sure whether Dinyar had the discipline that such a career involved, suggested he try it out with a recital to friends and family when they visited Calcutta in 1997.

Performing at the Calcutta School of Music, Vania sang before 250 people with Persis accompanying him on the piano.

The concert was



Above, concert pianist Pervez Mody, center, with his family. Right, Paranjoti Academy Chorus at the International Choral Festival in Manila in 1998.

Left, Freny Dalal-Paghdewala's Junior Choir [see page 38].

people with Persis accompanying him on the piano. The concert was a success, and his father gave him the nod of approval about pursuing opera for a living.

Besides singing, Vania was also succeeding with percussion, where he not only played for his school, but also for the Syracuse Symphony Youth Orchestra. There was a choice to be made, or so said major music schools that Vania was interested in attending post high school; a rigorous college schedule would not permit him to concentrate on both. So Vania chose to attend Onondaga Community College where they would allow him to pursue both singing and drums.

In 1997 he attended the Zoroastrian Youth Congress in London where he performed the Italian song *Santa Lucia* and dazzled people with his rendition of the *Star Spangled Banner* which he chose because it was America's Independence Day. His performance resulted in strong applause and ultimately first prize in the talent show. It also earned him recognition and an invitation to give a recital for the Zoroastrian Association of Southern California. The organization bought him a plane ticket and Vania had his first taste of star treatment.

Since then, he has put percussion on hold as his singing career has taken off over the course of the last three years. The 20-year-old singer, who calls Placido Domingo his hero, has partaken in the National Association of Teachers of Singing competition twice, earning second place in 1998 and third place in 1999 in the all-men's voice category. Vania has also performed at weddings and other various functions.

Surprisingly, Vania has begun taking piano lessons again. Perhaps one day Vania will become the famous opera singer or Broadway singer that he dreams about, and aspiring musicians will call him their hero.

- By Soozan Baxter

COOMI WADIA Director and Conductor

One of the few Asian women to wield a baton, Coomi Wadia, also an accomplished soprano and pianist, has been conductor of the internationally acclaimed Indian **Paranjoti Academy Chorus** since the death of its founder Dr. Victor Paranjoti, in 1967.

Reviewing the inaugural concert of a 1974 tour of Europe, the music critic in Bremen described Wadia: "whose sensitive, magic hands reduced their gestures to an absolute minimum. This young woman has a very strong artistic will, a suggestive force which holds the Choir inescapably gripped by her interpretation ... even the most vehement fortissimo cannot shake this disciplined woman ..."

Having gained international fame, Coomi Wadia was one of the very few conductors from around the world to be invited to represent her country at the 1972 International University Choral Festival, as a guest of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York.

Perhaps her most memorable concert was when she was selected from among 13 international conductors to conduct the Grand Finale, with over 700 singers and instrumentalists, at the Sister Cities Partnersingen Festival in Stuttgart in 1981.

An Associate and Licentiate of the Trinity College, London, she has worked and studied under well-known conductors and choral directors, including Helmuth Rilling (currently acknowledged to be one of the foremost exponents of the music of J. S. Bach). But strangely, it is Wadia's husband, Bombay diamond merchant Nariman Wadia (of K. Wadia jewelers)

who is the one who has studied conducting with Ernest Read in England, and is her critic and advisor.

Founded in 1956, initially under the auspices of the Bombay Madrigal Singers' Organization, the Paranjoti



Chorus is often the musical ambassador of the country. Invited often to international symposia and festivals, Wadia gets the opportunity to further her driving ambition – to use music to bring the nations of the world a little closer. In other words, the motto of the Chorus: "International Harmony through

International Music."

In its own way, the choir has added new dimensions to the East-West blend of music with songs written specifically for it in the Indian languages and set to music which is essentially Western. "Indian classical music has no harmony; it has only a melody line. Western music is based on harmony. In a choir you have different people singing different notes which together make harmony."

With a repertoire as varied as the singers, the Chorus is equally adept with a Bartok (sung in German), a Debussy cantata or aria in French, a Sanskrit poem sung in Hindi, an Italian love song, a Konkani boat song, an American spiritual, or a song in Spanish, Latin, Polish or Japanese. Of their rendering of the Mass in B Minor by Bach, a *Midday* review read:

"I have never been so moved at a concert. Again and again I had goose pimples as the overpoweringly stately and majestic music rose up to the heavens ... as usual, she was poised and conducted the incredibly complex Mass with ease." [From *Program books and Parsiana*, January 1992]. ■

SORAB WADIA

Pianist, tenor, actor

The multi-talented Sorab Wadia's performing career – as an accomplished concert pianist, tenor and actor is hitting the high notes as he delights audiences across the US and back home in Bombay.

An exceptionally versatile performer, Wadia's pianoforte recitals have garnered excellent reviews, as have his singing, comedy, and occasional stint acting in Shakespeare.

His "brilliant performance" of Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, with the Paranjoti Chorus and the Bombay Chamber Orchestra conducted, of course, by his mom, the distinguished Coomi Wadia, in 1997, is described by Sheryar Ookerjee:

"As Wadia's powerful left hand repeatedly struck the keyboard and bounced almost up to his ears, and the Steinway answered back in clear, ringing sounds, one knew one was in for a demonstration of showmanship ... he did it all with superb confidence ... The long piano introduction gave him scope to revel in it till the orchestra at last took up the theme (an early version of the Ode to Joy of the Ninth Symphony) and then, at the right moment, the chorus also joined in the fun and brought this delightful work to a rousing end."

His singing voice and talent for comedic acting have also been well recognized. At the Scotia Festival of Music, in Halifax, the reviews read: "... tenor and festival madcap Wadia performed a theater piece called Yosha's Morning Song, a vulgar comic turn that brought us delight-

fully down ..." and "Nothing could prepare you for the brilliant comedy of Bombay tenor Sorab Wadia in an elbow-in-cheek *Last Contrabass in Las Vegas*". As "the scariest witch on record" in Opera Omaha's 1996 season of *Hansel and Gretel*, the review praised "Wadia's every movement and his coaxing singing lines".

Wadia's performance in Verdi's Falstaff with the Aspen Opera Theater, was well-noticed: "... a singer ready for character tenor roles is Sorab Wadia, from Bombay ... he created a little masterpiece of character and music with his Bardolfo. He stole every scene he was in, not by mugging but just by being damn funny." Wadia has also done *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Magic Flute* with that company.



It was his acting and piano playing as well as his singing ability that won him the role of The Stranger in the Augusta Read Thomas opera *Ligeia* at the Evian Festival in France, in 1994, performed by the Peabody Chamber Opera with Mstislav Rostropovich conducting.

Wadia is currently studying for a Master of Music in Voice at the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston. He has a Bachelor of Music degree (which he pursued on a 4-year Peabody Merit Scholarship), and a Master of Music

(Piano) degree from the prestigious Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University as well as a Licentiate Diploma (Piano) from the Trinity College of Music, London. ■

Excerpted below are some questions raised by Sorab Wadia for a History of Opera class research paper.

ZARATHUSHTRA IN OPERA: A MASONIC CONNECTION?

When I discovered an opera by the French Baroque master, Jean-Philippe Rameau called *Zoroastre* written in 1749, I became more than a little excited.

I was already aware that in Mozart's *Die Zauberfloete* (*The Magic Flute*), the character Sarastro was based loosely on the figure of Zarathushtra.

He is the symbol for light and day and all things noble and wise. It is he who is the head of the priests and teaches the young hero and heroine about divinity and truth. He foils the plans of the Queen of the Night who represents all things dark and evil. Mozart and his librettist (script writer) were

members of the Masonic Lodge in Vienna and the *Magic Flute* is filled with masonic symbolism; Sarastro being one of many.

Rameau's librettist, Cahusac, was also a mason and I was fascinated to find that in *Zoroastre* many Zarathushti concepts are far more vividly portrayed than in the Mozart piece. The following is a quote from the Grove Dictionary of Opera:

"*Zoroastre's* theme, derived from Persian sources, is the struggle between Good and Evil – between,

on the one hand, the great religious reformer Zoroastre, represented by Orosmade (in the opera, Orosmade is heard but not seen. He is represented only by a voice coming out of a cloud of fire – so true to our beliefs, he is not portrayed in human form) the Supreme Being and God of Light, and on the other, an ambitious sorcerer Abramane, servant of Ahri-man, Spirit of Darkness ... Abramane, characterized as 'inventor of the cult of false gods', was created by Cahusac to counterbalance the figure of Zoroastre ..." In a re-working of the opera in 1756, Orosmade's character is replaced by Oromases, who is King of the Genii, and above Zoroastre. Unlike the first version, here, regrettably, he is portrayed as a human.

The masonic connection. I find it quite amazing that some 18th century Europeans, through the Lodge were so familiar with the basics of the Zarathushti faith. However, I find little or no information about Zarathushtra in writings about the Lodge today. Why has Zarathushtra completely disappeared from writings about the Lodge in this century (at least in the few books I have found?) Is he still important to the Masonic tradition? What more did

the Masons of the 1700s know about our religion?

Were there other sources, non-masonic, from which 18th century Europeans may have learned about Zarathushtra and his teachings and the religion? Is there any character similar to Abramane in Zarathushti history or mythology? Was Zarathushtra a Bactrian? Several sources in opera writings keep mentioning Bactria.

By some miracle, does anyone have a recording of Zoroastre? It was put out by Deutsche Harmonia Mundi in 1983, but is out of print. I was able to locate a score of the 1756 version in the Houston Public Library.

Anyway, in case you are dying to know the rest of the story ...

Abramane kills the King of Bactria. His daughter Amelite escapes to a valley in Hindustan, at the base of Mt. Taurus. Her beloved, Zoroastre, is with her. After many an aria, a ballet or two danced by the Hindustanis for the sad couple, many prayers, several interventions by Orosmade, magic spells and miracles, love duets and incantations ... Zoroastre vanquishes the villain and gets the kingdom back. Abramane is crushed and Good triumphs.

After all, this is opera! ■



Whoever is good to the wicked is wicked himself

Whoever is a friend unto the righteous is righteous himself

This is the fundamental law of the Religion of Ahura

- Yasna 46.6

Silence in the face of evil is itself evil;

God will not hold us guiltless.

Not to speak is to speak.

Not to act is to act.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was hung by the Nazis in 1945 just days before the collapse of the Third Reich, for helping Jews to escape to Switzerland.

[Submitted by Kersey H. Antia]

By Khursheed Khurody
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SORABJI – THE MAN

While at Stowe, an English boarding school in the town of Buckingham, I was faced with the daunting task of having to write a thesis for my Advanced Level examinations in music for the Royal College of Music, London. Having completed all practical requirements at the piano, as well as being prepared for the examinations in history, analysis, theory, and counterpoint, I was troubled over a suitable thesis topic and pondered over it for months.

The two or three other students appearing for these exams that year chose to work on Beethoven, Brahms, and Scriabin; but I wished to stray from these and other such composers as so much has already been written about them.

I was on the verge of capitulating, however, when one morning, during practice for the upcoming national Young Pianist of the Year competition, my director of music walked in, and offered me a glass of sherry. "Drink this," he said. "It will help. And then sit down and play that Rachmaninoff for me again."

Sipping that sherry, which I found extremely difficult to stomach at 8 o'clock in the morning, I started mumbling about what a good parsi girl I had always been until now, and how I never should have accepted the sherry ... Then suddenly, my director jumped up, grabbed the glass from my hand (virtually empty), and started shouting, "*That's it! That's it! Sorabji, Sorabji! He's Parsi too. You shall do your thesis on him!*"

And that was my first introduction to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji — a name that has inspired the awe and dread of pianists; an iconoclastic and enigmatic figure in 20th century music; a composer whose works are much more heard of than heard.

Early years. Sorabji was born in Chingford in England on the 14th

Glimpses into the heart and mind of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji — a name that inspired the awe and dread of pianists; an iconoclastic and enigmatic figure in 20th century music; a composer whose works are much more heard of than heard.

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

The Man & His Music

August, 1892. He was in his 90's when I began work on him. He lived most of his life in England and shunned the big cities, preferring his "blessedly quiet country retreat." His father was a wealthy Parsi businessman, and his mother, a Spanish-Sicilian opera singer of fiery temperament. He was quick to point out that these origins make him neither Indian nor English (quoting Kenneth Derus):

"Who was it who said that the English were the silliest race in Europe after the Swedes? How long is it going to be before they get it into their goddam silly heads that a Parsi is not, never was, and never could be Indian ... One thing above all infuriates me and that is to be called English or British for no better reason than that I happen to have been born in this country. Is a kitten born in a dog kennel a puppy, I ask you?"

Sorabji was educated privately in England, and though he had some training in counterpoint and harmony, he is largely self-taught in music.

Sorabji's name. Before I embark on a discussion of the man, his music, and the staggering complexity of his scores, it would be worth sharing an excerpt written by him on his name. He was christened Leon Dudley, but later changed his name to Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. The note says:

"To Those Whom It May Concern, If Any, And Others Who Mind Any-

body's Business But Their Own: Dates and places of birth relating to myself given in various works of reference are invariably false. It is also stated that my name, that is the one I am known by, is not my real name. Now one is given one's name, at some such ceremony as baptism ... on the occasion of one's formal reception into a religious faith. In the ancient Zarathushtrian Parsi community to which on my father's side, I have the honor to belong, this ceremony is performed in childhood, or owing to special circumstances as in my case, later in life, when I assumed my name as it is now ..."

Approaching Sorabji. Slowly, over the next few weeks, my work on Sorabji began. With little published by him in scores or musical recordings it was difficult, but we managed to start gathering music by contacting various archives and offices in London such as the British Music Information Center. Finally we tracked down his publishers who gave me his address — "The Eye, Corfe Castle, Townsend!"

Naturally, I was somewhat startled at first, but soon learned that Sorabji was a recluse living in a granite tower in Dorset. No one ever went into that tower, and no one ever left, except the maid, who I believe, handled his mail and shopping. (The whole thing sounded a little like Charlie and the Chocolate factory to me at the time!) And Sorabji protected his privacy

with a number of signs declaring visitors unwelcome. One reputedly read: "Roman Catholic nuns in full habit may enter without appointment."

"Nonetheless, you shall seek contact with him," my director emphatically announced. "If anyone can, you can! You are a little girl (I was in my teens), a pianist, and Parsi!"

I wrote a 3-page letter telling Sorabji all about myself, my Zoroastrian background, my English upbringing similar to his, my work on the score of his dense Organ Symphony, and last, but not least, I meekly approached the question of possibly being able to visit him. Not long after, I received a reply — large quivering letters scrawled all over a card saying, "**I SEE NO ONE, BUT NO ONE, BUT NO ONE, BUT NO ONE, BUT ONE OR TWO VERY OLD PEOPLE AND FRIENDS.**"

Despite its wording, this letter was indeed a breakthrough as no one else managed to even get a reply. I was thus motivated and wrote back sending him a copy of a little pink book which always lay under my pillow, titled, *Avestan Prayers for Zarathushtrian Children in Roman Script*. He was obviously touched because he responded with an envelope full of notes, information, and a picture of himself, clearly a few decades old. The picture amused my music director and prompted him to advise me to send back my picture at age 6 months! I did!

Very soon after, I managed to establish rapport with this remarkable and fascinating, yet eccentric individual. And we exchanged letters and a basket of mangoes which I carried back from Bombay after a school holiday, and mailed to him. I also sent him a dozen red roses through Inter-Flora, Bombay, for his birthday and the Parsi New Year, both of which fall in August. All this was received warmly, and we continued to share correspondence. [See extracts from one of Sorabji's letters, next page].

Exploring his roots. While in Bombay for my summer vacations, I decided to explore his roots. After much running around and research, I finally managed to locate the very Erard Medium Grand Piano on which Sorabji had played on his visit to India in the early 1930's. At the time it stood in a beautiful mansion by the sea and quite surprisingly, it now belongs to my grand aunt who helped me locate Sorabji's cousin, a Mrs. Dhun Dadabhoy, now living in an old Parsi bungalow just a few houses down from my family on Carmichael Road.

I had tea with this lady, who shared memories of him. He was a whimsical person given to aloofness, even in his youth. He had a particular distaste for the telephone and made his appointments by telegram. Further, he was already aware that his music went beyond the sensibilities of his contemporaries which exasperated him and perhaps caused him to become even more of a recluse, while banning all performances of his works.

I also managed to get hold of some priceless legal records by finding out the names of his father's solicitors. I discovered that his father Shapurji Sorabji Engineer died at a health resort in Germany. Upon his death,

three women suddenly appeared on the scene claiming inheritances and a long court-case called the *Bablibai Case* began. First Bablibai, a singing girl from a not very respectable back-

And so it was discovered, only after his death, that Shapurji had two wives, and while he often told Bablibai that he was travelling to Europe on business, he used these trips to catch up with his second wife, Mary Magdelaine and his son, then living at Regents Park, London. It was also found after his death that he made two wills, one for Bablibai and an adopted son in Bombay, and the other for Mary Magdelaine and Leon in the UK. He also had some estates in Goa, but no one seems to know what happened to them. It was during this court case in the late 1920's and 30's when Sorabji came to Bombay with his mother for the first time, and had his navjote done.

An unexpected phone call.

When I returned to the UK, I wrote to Sorabji telling him about my meeting with his relatives, and about the Erard Piano, which I played on too, quite often. I received an unexpected phone call.

He sounded like an old colonel, rather disjointed because of his age. He enquired, "Have you heard of Delius? You know Delius and Busoni really admired my works." Encouraged by my response he spoke further and enquired whether I had heard of Mc...[unclear], a great author and Scottish poet of our time. (I wondered whose time, Sorabji's or mine?) He continued to tell me that a famous book by this author was titled, *The Company I have Kept* and the first chapter was devoted entirely to him. "Try and get the

book," he went on, "It praises me and my music." We then spoke on about his fingers giving him trouble in old age and he thanked me profusely for the flowers and mangoes, though he explicitly stated that he preferred the Venezuelan variety.

He reminisced further that the Parsis of Bombay were unappreciative of



N.B. CHANCE CALLERS STRICTLY BARRED

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

of
OXFORD COMPANION TO MUSIC
BAKER BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF MUSICIANS
DICTIONARY OF MODERN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS
INTERNATIONAL CYCLOPEDIA OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS
COBBETT CYCLOPEDIA OF CHAMBER MUSIC
GROVE DICTIONARY OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS (1935)

*The Eye, Townsend
Corfe Castle, Wareham
Dorset*

0920-480364

Sorabji's business card. He was very particular about the spelling of his name, and asks us to compare it with all the wrong spellings in the listed dictionaries.

ground claimed to be Shapurji's wife. Then, out of the blue, another Parsi lady appeared on the scene, also claiming to be his wife, but she did not get much money from the case. From Europe appeared Mary Magdelaine with her son, Leon Dudley (the composer Sorabji), providing legal documents of her marriage to Shapurji.

The EYE

5-9-84.

Corfe Castle..Wareham..Dorset.

Dear Miss Khurody;

I had already answered yours of August 8th, and sent it by air mail to your Bombay address, but as it seems highly probable that it has gone astray, I am sending this to Stove where it will be awaiting you on your return there

The first thing I want to say is that I safely received both the bouquet and the mangoes for which I thank you very much.

Both mangoes were delicious as they always are, but you may not know that the Nejezuela mangoes are even finer than the Bombay ones. Also want to say that had I known you intended writing to Mr. Frank Holliday I should have strictly vetoed this. All connection with this gentleman and myself came to an end—complete and final—some years since, and I have no intention of ever resuming this with him.

By the way DO NOT SUGGEST NOR ENCOURAGE ANYBODY WHOEVER IT MAY BE TO COME HERE UNINVITED AND UNASKED BY MYSELF. I absolutely will not tolerate chance visits from strangers no matter whom they may be. As a matter of fact two Parsis who live not far from here

did call on me and as I took an instant dislike to both of them it made it very plain to them that I did not wish to see them...

Being that it happened at the time I was busy with my own household affairs and always greatly annoyed by unwelcome and unnecessary interruption, so please make this VERY VERY PLAIN TO ANYBODY WHATS EVER WILL MAY THINK OF AS THEY SAY DROPPING IN ON ME?

I hope you have had a good holiday. I spent the best part of a year in Bombay after my father's death in 1932, but I HATED the place and but for the great kindness of some relatives I should have found it unbearable'....

Yes I remember that Erard, No it was NOT a concert grand, and it was by this time very much the worse for wear. If I rightly remember it was in the house of some Parsis who were the only people I ever met in Bombay who ever showed any understanding or appreciation of my own work or ever seemed to have the real use of the importance of a number of world famous musicians had said and written about about my work even all those years ago.

My cousin Jhehangir's wife, Dr. Dossibai was a lady doctor the first Parsi woman to become a London M.D. She was quite famous in Bombay.

I hope you have a successful outcome to your exams.

Yours sincerely,

Kaikhosro Shapoorji Sorabji

his music during his visit there with his mother in the early 1930's, which led him to cut off all communication with his Indian relatives and give up membership of the Parsi Association in London. Sorabji confided that nonetheless, he had undergone the Navjote ceremony at which only he and the priest were present, "... and no one else at all."

Incidentally, my research further revealed that the Dastoor who performed the Navjote, Dr. Warden was intimately known to my maternal grandfather, Colonel Khareghat. Sorabji ended the 20 minute conversation indicating that a future meeting may just be possible.

The meeting. And in 1987, on my way to the United States for the first time to attend college, I stopped off in the UK and met him. He finally relented. Unfortunately though, by this time, at the age of 95, he was no longer able to look after himself, and had moved from his granite tower, *The Eye*, to Marley House, an old aged home in Dorset.

Armed with a sandwich and an apple which I would eat on the train from London to Dorset, some flowers for Sorabji and a silver Asho Farohar with a prayer book, I set out on my journey that August morning, dressed in a navy blue pleated skirt, white blouse with my school tie, blazer, and little straw hat, so typical of English public school, with my hair neatly pony-tailed behind me and secured with a ribbon. Upon arrival at the station, I took a taxi to Marley House where the matron in charge met me. She asked me to sit down while she informed Sorabji of my arrival. After 5 minutes she appeared in the lobby, and said that he refused to see me as he wasn't feeling well.

Tears welled up in my eyes and stunned, I just stood and stared at her

Letter from Sorabji to Khurody, 1984.

with those flowers trembling in my hands. "Wait here my child" she said, just like Mother Superior in the *Sound of Music*. "He is a very difficult man," and marched off for another 10 minutes, during which I had visions of this 95-year-old Parsi genius getting a firm talking to from a stern British matron waving her finger at him! And sure enough, she came back, picked me up, and said, "Follow me!" So there we were, a 6-foot tall matron of maybe 200 pounds and a skinny school-girl, less than half her size, parading down the corridors of Marley House with aged British citizens peering at us from their wheelchairs, shaking their heads from side to side, saying, "Dear, Oh Dear, Oh Dear!"

At the door of his room, she left me, after knocking, and swinging it open. Still trembling I walked in, and froze, for the sun streamed in straight at my eyes from an opposite window, leaving me blinded. It took me a few seconds to orient myself, after which I blinked, looked around the room, and there in the corner, my eyes fell upon Mr. Sorabji, sitting in a chair by the window, with a blanket thrown over his knees, his arms folded in front of his chest, his eyebrows knotted in a very firm scowl. I walked over to him and for the next almost half a minute, we just stared at each other in pin drop silence. No one moved, no one spoke. And I didn't even dare breathe. Finally, I blinked, smiled, and he broke the silence, ridding himself of that scowl.

"I don't like women," he said, "least of all young ones." I smiled again, and handed him the flowers. He took them, and pointing at a chair about two feet away from him, he said, "Sit there." I did. Again we stared at each other, looking straight into one another's eyes, saying nothing for almost a minute. The sun was streaming in on my face and hair, and I felt as though I was being studied and loved. I wanted to hug him, to comb

his bushy white hair, but I sat still for fear of giving him a heart attack, from which he might never recover.

"Here, Mr. Sorabji," I finally said, "this is a silver Asho Farohar for you. I bought it in Bombay." And I got up from my chair and slipped it into his hands, whereupon his fingers curled around mine, and this time, we gazed at each other, with my hand in his, and my face just a few inches away. Perhaps he had not seen a young woman in over 50 years, as he had always lived as a recluse, or perhaps we saw something in one another for which there are no words. Gradually though, I withdrew my hand as it was shaking, and I sat on it. "Oh, its one of those things," he said, as he opened the box and looked at the Farohar. "I had one of those many years ago when I went to Bombay. Ghastly place that is!" And then we

“ Sorabji's compositions are staggeringly complex. Behind his enigmatic personality was a brilliant musical mind which let Sorabji to compose the longest and most complex works in the entire literature of music. ”

talked, a little about the Parsis, about his music, and about how I would publish all I knew about him, so he would always be remembered."

At the end of a half hour I chose to leave, as I could see him getting tired, and outside in the corridor, I could hear the rattle of trolleys. I guessed that lunch was on its way. I took the Farohar and prayer book from his hands and placed them by his bedside. Once more I stared into his eyes, and he into mine. I knew I would never see him again, and I could not say goodbye. Instead I just smiled. He continued to gaze at me, fixated, right until I shut the door.

On the 15th of October, 1988, a year after we met, Sorabji died at the age of 96. Sadly, I was unable to attend his funeral, but I vowed on that day,

that after my formal education was behind me, I would undertake to write a book on Sorabji — the man and his music. Ironically, exactly on my birthday, the following year, in February 1989, he was remembered in a special concert which was taped with commentaries and broadcast the world over from the Netherlands.

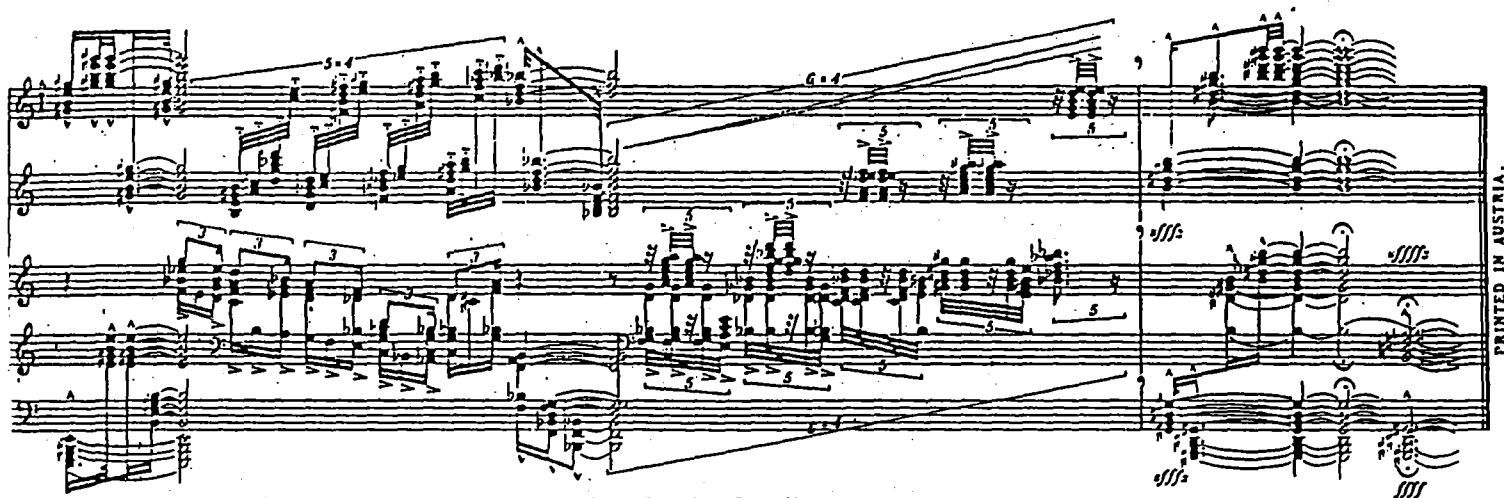
SORABJI – THE MUSIC

Sorabji's compositions are staggeringly complex. Behind his enigmatic personality was a brilliant musical mind which led Sorabji to compose the longest and most complex works in the entire literature of music. His largest piano composition takes over 7 hours to perform and much of his piano music is notated on systems 3,4,5,6 and even 7 staves. His orchestral works are on a similar scale. The Jami symphony has a length of 830 pages, and is notated on a system of nearly 100 staves.

Both European and Eastern influences are found in Sorabji's compositions. Impressionism is evident in the early works, as is the influence of certain late Romantics such as Busoni, Messiaen and Symanowski.

Sorabji's music is dense, highly wrought and elaborately decorated. Only a handful of pianists could possibly conquer the intellectual and technical difficulties and so, in 1936, Sorabji imposed a ban forbidding all public performances of his compositions. Furious at the inability of musicians to understand or master his works, he argued that a general silence was preferable to having his scores misrepresented, or at worst mutilated. Fortunately, Sorabji lifted the ban in 1976 and his works are gradually entering into the repertoire of formal recitals.

His first compositions date from 1914. Only his earliest works are published (1918-1930). The most mature remain in manuscript. In 1913 he decided to become a music critic and between 1924 and 1945, he wrote nearly 500 articles for several



+ in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti:
1.30 p.m. die vicezima quinta mensis Junil A.D.N.S. MCMXXX
Kaikhosru Sorabji opus perfectit domo suo MCLXXV. Ad portum
Clarinensem vicinum Marius Regentis.

Printed in Austria
Weldhem & Ebert A.G. Vienna.

An example of Sorabji's music: the conclusion of Opus Clavicembalisticum, a gargantuan chordal passage con somma forza e grandezza, spread across five staves. The Guinness Book of World Records has listed it as the longest non-repetitive piano composition, but that is not correct. Sorabji has written works far longer, even to about seven hours duration.

English chronicles and journals. Sorabji has also written two marvelously illuminating books, *Around Music* and *Mi Contra Fa*. As a sytlist he was brilliant, yet unselfconscious; as a critic he was gloriously unforgiving.

Sorabji publicly performed his works in London, Glasgow, Paris, Vienna (1921-22) and Bombay (1920-1936) - but disliked performing and abandoned concert life. Among his works are sonatas and concertos for piano, huge piano symphonies, organ symphonies, fragrant songs, chamber works and a large number of orchestral works.

Sorabji has never been noted for his modesty. "My Opus Clavicembalisticum (OC) has been described as the greatest and most important work for piano since the Art of the Fugue..." He then goes on to say that OC is dedicated in part to the everlasting glory of those few men blessed and sanctified in the curses and execrations of those men whose praise is eternal damnation." The score is 248 pages long and a performance lasts 3 hours and 50 minutes. The technical difficulties of performing this work are unsurmountable, and the unusually structured chords stretch the

hands painfully. I think it is quite safe to say that Sorabji wrote with no regard whatsoever for the performer.

OC was written from 1929-30 and performed for the first and very nearly last time, by Sorabji himself in Glasgow in 1930. According to the legend, Sorabji left the stage at the end of Part I, drank some Scotch whiskey, said, "Lets get on with it," and resumed playing while the audience was still getting up for the first intermission. He played straight through to the end, soaked like a rat in perspiration, whereupon it was necessary to wrap him in blankets!

Sorabji's orchestral writing at first glance seems to consist of countless rather undistinguished phrases of average length, moving with little purposeful direction. In fact the writing consists of a rather small number of generic melodies of quite enormous length, each quite lovely, and each moving in a purposeful way. What seems like phrases are only parts of much larger phrases that pass back and forth. Heard properly, the effect of the writing is a kind of musical vertigo.

Most music makes its impact as it is heard, through a process of associa-

tion with what has been heard at most a few seconds ago. OC is quite different. It seems designed to be an object of memory, not ongoing experience.

On examining most of Sorabji's works, we discover a strong predilection for the use of so-called baroque art forms and baroque musical texture with its complex contrapuntal lines, closely woven threads and uniformity of musical patterns.

The Eastern influences in Sorabji's work are noticeable in the complexity of his rhythms and in certain works like the Jami Symphony and Gulistan, based to some extent, on literary works, Persian in origin. The Piano Sonatas 1 and 2 are offshoots from the Scriabin tree and French Impressionism is apparent in other pieces.

Sorabji has also written a series of light-hearted compositions, sometimes as brilliant parodies of other composers and of national styles. There are two Spanish Fantasias exploiting Spanish rhythms and melodic curves, which certainly compare with the best work in this genre, by Liszt, Busoni and Godowsky. Another composition pays affectionate tribute to the Vien-

nese waltz rhythms and melodies of Johann Strauss.

Sorabji's music is an acquired taste; it needs time and patience to assimilate and then appreciate. Here is what he has to say about his own music: "If you don't like it because it isn't the present day done thing, that is just too bad."

I am happy to announce that CDs of Sorabji's music are increasingly becoming available, and I urge people to acquaint themselves with his style. The long melodic lines have consumed me, and so, with this introduction, I hope, that the intricate and spectacular works of this great composer be recognized and enjoyed by all, but especially his community to which I know, he was very proud to belong.

Much of what I have written here has come from material sent to me directly by Sorabji. It is my hope that this re-introduction of the name and sound of Sorabji's music will herald an overwhelming appreciation of the creative work of so remarkable, so dogged, and original a personage as Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji.

On a personal level, I feel proud that a composer of such talent and brilliance should belong to my small community. ■



*At the time of this writing, **Khurshed Khurody** was a graduate student in Indology at Harvard University.*

The Farokh Balsara-Freddie Mercury Story

Freddie Mercury's story from shy school-boy Farokh Balsara in a Panchgani boarding school to flamboyant rock superstar.

By Roshan Rivetna



PHOTOS: LONDON TIMES MAGAZINE, NOV 17, 1996

Early pictures of the boy who would be pop legend Freddie Mercury: baby Farokh with his mother Jer; right, dressed up to go to the agiary on his birthday.

In the record-book of the Zanzibar Parsi Anjuman, there is an entry, hand-written in Gujarati: Farokh Bomi Balsara, aged 8, navjote performed on Roz Ram, Mah Mehr, 1323 Yz., March 21, 1954, in the Adenwalla Agiary at the Parsi shamba (estate) in Zanzibar, by Ervad Ardeshir Kekobad Dastoor.

The entry gave no inkling that the child was destined to become pop icon Freddie Mercury, who rocked

the world with his undisciplined music and lifestyle, whose band, Queen, would sell over 100 million records, and whose assets at the time of his death at age 45 in 1991, would be over £25 million.

According to the *London Times* [November 17, 1996]: "There are only around 100,000 Parsis left in the world (which is incorrect, there are probably double that number) the smallest congregation of any of the

world's principal religions. When Queen performed at *Rock in Rio*, in South America, they played live to nearly three times as many pop fans as there are Parsis ... The 1985 Live Aid concert at which Queen stole the show, was beamed to 170 countries and watched by over 1.5 billion fans, twice as many as watched Neil Armstrong become the first man to walk on the moon. This is fame."

Born on September 5, 1946, in Zanzibar, to Bomi and Jer Balsara who had moved to that British Colony in East Africa for Bomi's job as cashier in the High Court, Freddie, from the age of five attended the Zanzibar Missionary School. Wanting the best for him, his parents enrolled Freddie in 1955, when he was not yet nine, as a boarder at St. Peter's in Panchgani.

A quiet studious boy, he was well-disciplined and took part in dramatics, music, table tennis and boxing. With some other boys, he formed a band, *The Hectics* [see photo next page] and played old film songs for school functions. Freddie studied the piano assiduously, encouraged to practice during holiday breaks in Mumbai by his mother and his aunts. He also sang enthusiastically in the school choir. His dream then was to become a good singer.

His background was, as Freddie's first cousin Perviz Darukhanawala put it, impeccable: "His family enjoyed quite a sophisticated social life within the confines of their Parsi religion and culture."

His uncle Nariman Khory of Mumbai recalled in an interview with *Parasana*, what was probably Mercury's first public performance. The family had gone for dinner to Bertorelli restaurant at Worli and the band had ruck up *How Much is that Doggie in the Window*. Seeing the young Mercury humming along, one of the band members invited him to join them. While other kids might have declined, Mercury got up on stage and sang. "After the song, he was all flushed and shy but while he was singing you could see that he had a stage presence even at that age."

This one flash of bravado aside, Khory remembers his nephew as a shy boy who was very aware of the fact that his front teeth stuck out of his mouth very prominently. "Bucky, that's what we called him at school on account of his buck teeth," said Gita (Bharucha) Choksi, now living in Frankfurt, who had been the object of Freddie's affections as a 15-year-old member of the choir from a nearby girls' school. "Bucky and I were especially close, just good friends, nothing more. But you must understand that in those days, holding hands was the be-all and end-all," said Gita in a *Daily Mail* interview.

Dinshaw Kapadia, Mercury's cousin residing at Dadar Parsi Colony in Mumbai, with whom Mercury spent his school

vacations, remembered Mercury as a very reserved and caring boy, "a family person and a dutiful son" and believes he retained these attributes despite his wild public image.

In 1962, in the aftermath of Zanzibar's independence, Mercury's parents migrated to Britain and bought a house in Feltham. Freddie was 17 when he joined them and sister Kashmira a year later in London. He remained close to his family. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, he dropped his family name in 1970. Instead he chose Mercury, partly because it was his rising planet. He sang on weekends with a band called *Wreckage*.

Life for Mercury, took a dramatic turn after he met guitarist Brian May. May was looking for a vocalist and Mercury suited his needs. *Queen* was thus born.

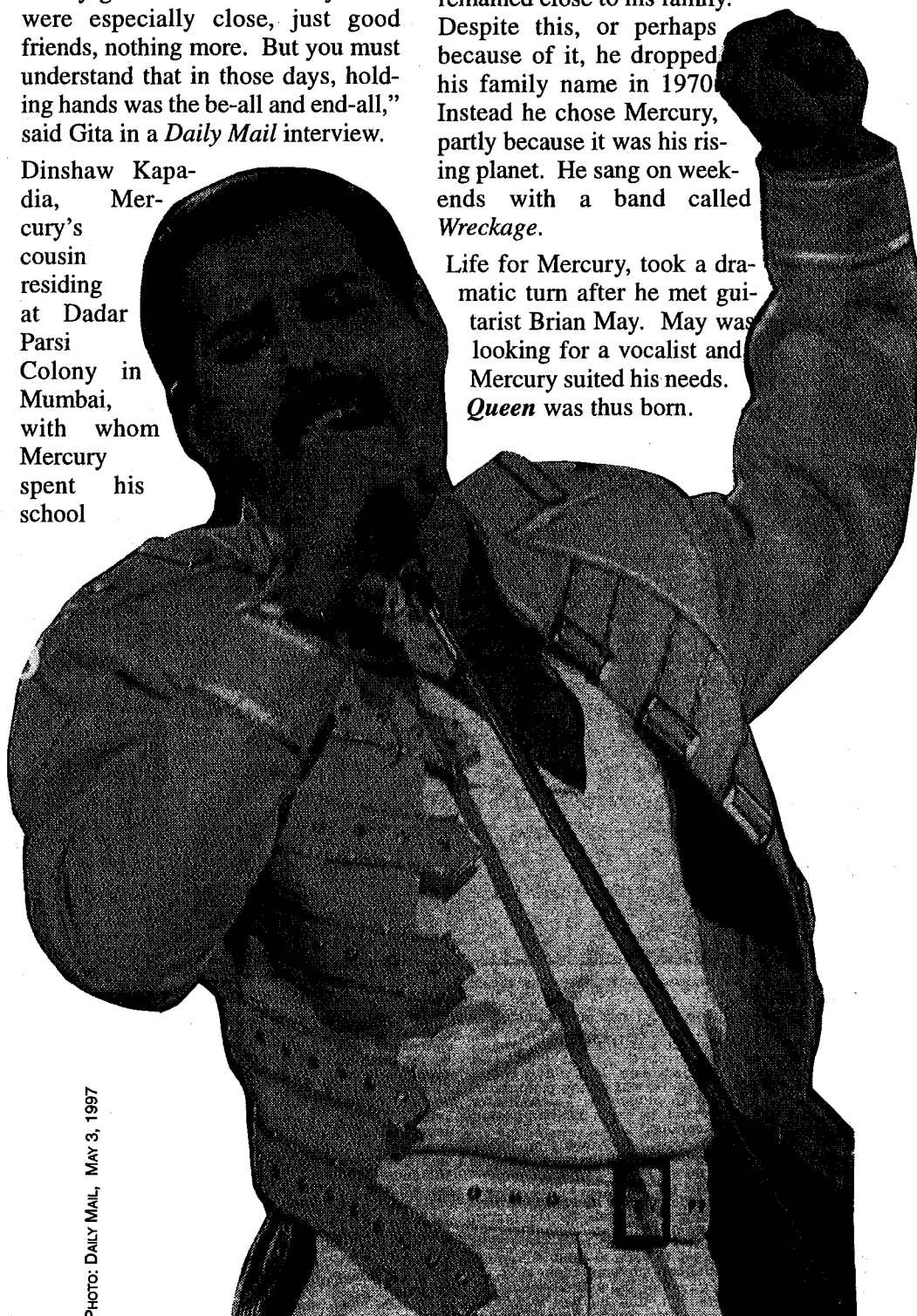
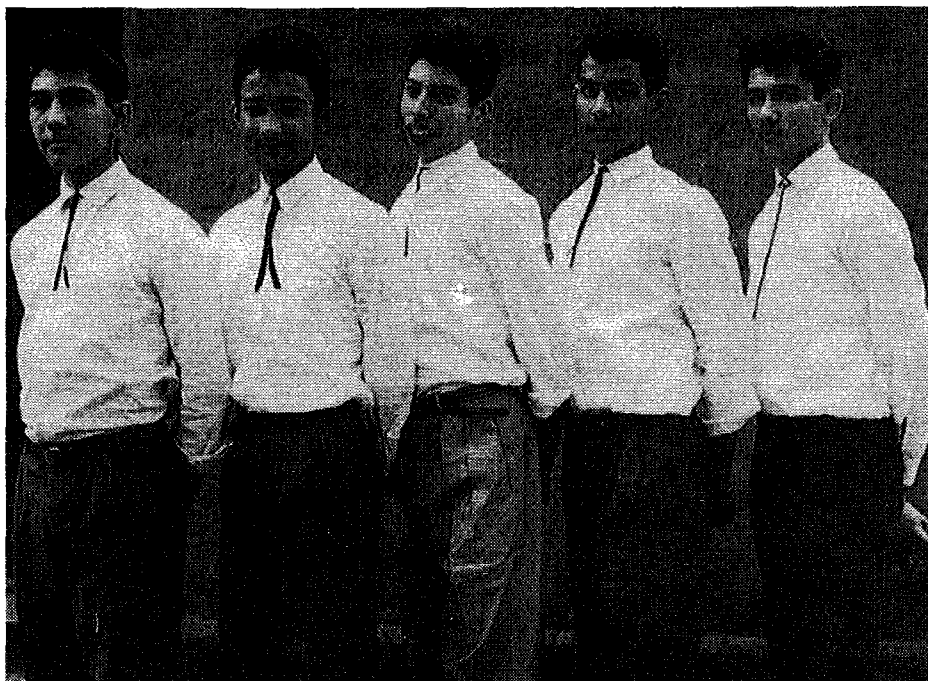


PHOTO: DAILY MAIL, MAY 3, 1997



Freddie, center in his first band, *The Hectics* at *St. Peter's*. Below, *Mercury* in the 1980s.

Queen's first single to reach the top 10 was *Seven Seas of Rhye*. There was no turning back. On stage he presented a mesmerizing image. His strong athletic build, piercing eyes, and flamboyant outfits captivated his fans. The moment of indelible glory came in 1975 with *Bohemian Rhapsody*, a six-minute piece with an operatic sequence and a heavy metal finale, that topped the charts for nine consecutive weeks.

Possibly to avoid the double prejudice of being both gay and an Asian immigrant, Mercury chose to keep his Indian Parsi-Zarathushti roots and his gay lifestyle to himself. Prompted by his conservative Parsi upbringing he presented Mary Austin, whom he met during his early days, to his deeply religious parents as his fiancée.

A loyal family man who liked to surround himself with photographs of his nearest and dearest ones, a loving son and brother, he would call his parents often from whichever exotic part of the world he was in, and visit them regularly. When his father had surgery, Mercury would drop in at the hospital to visit, to the utter disbelief of the hospital staff.

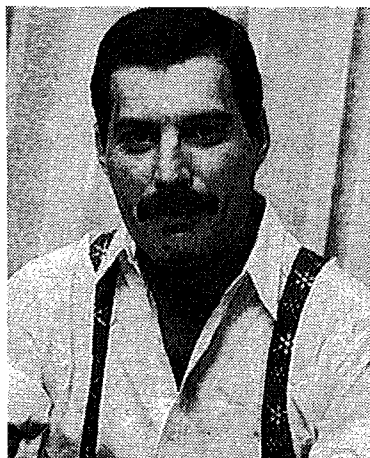
Freddie, the millionaire rock idol, was still unsure of himself. "My

songs are like Bic razors," he would say, "Disposable pop." Perhaps nobody could imagine that the appeal of this Parsi boy from Zanzibar would rival even that of the king of rock-n-roll, Elvis Presley.

Freddie's end, "peacefully, on November 24, 1991, at his home in Kensington, London, as a result of bronchial pneumonia brought on by AIDS" was perhaps a result of his flamboyant lifestyle.

The cry in *Bohemian Rhapsody* sounds almost prophetic: "Mama, life has just begun! But now I've gone and thrown it all away."

Zarathushti funeral ceremonies for Mercury, who was cremated, were performed by London mobeds Ervad Keki Kanga and Ervad Jal Karkaria at the West London Crematorium. It was a very private affair, attended by his family, closest associates (among them Elton John) and a few Zarathushti families, by invitation only. Meanwhile, across the ocean, in Mumbai, a controversy was brewing and trustees of the Rustom-



veritable hospital for him. Not a penny of Mercury's millions went to any Zarathushti organizations or causes, (albeit his parents were regular contributors to the Zoroastrian association in London and contributed a small amount in his memory).

While Mercury, sadly, chose to play down his Parsi roots during his glory days, in death he will bring honor to the community. The UK Post Office will shortly be issuing a Millennium Series of postage stamps, and the figure on the stamp recognizing contributions to music will be that of Freddie Mercury, the shy Parsi schoolboy from Panchgani. ■

[Sources: Waldemar Januszczak, *Sunday Times Magazine*, November 17, 1996; information and materials provided by Rusi Dalal; Gustasp Irani, *Parsiana*, February 1992; Sheela Raval and Vijay Rana, *India Today*, December 15, 1996; and other newspaper and web articles.]

On the Rock, Pop & Jazz Scene

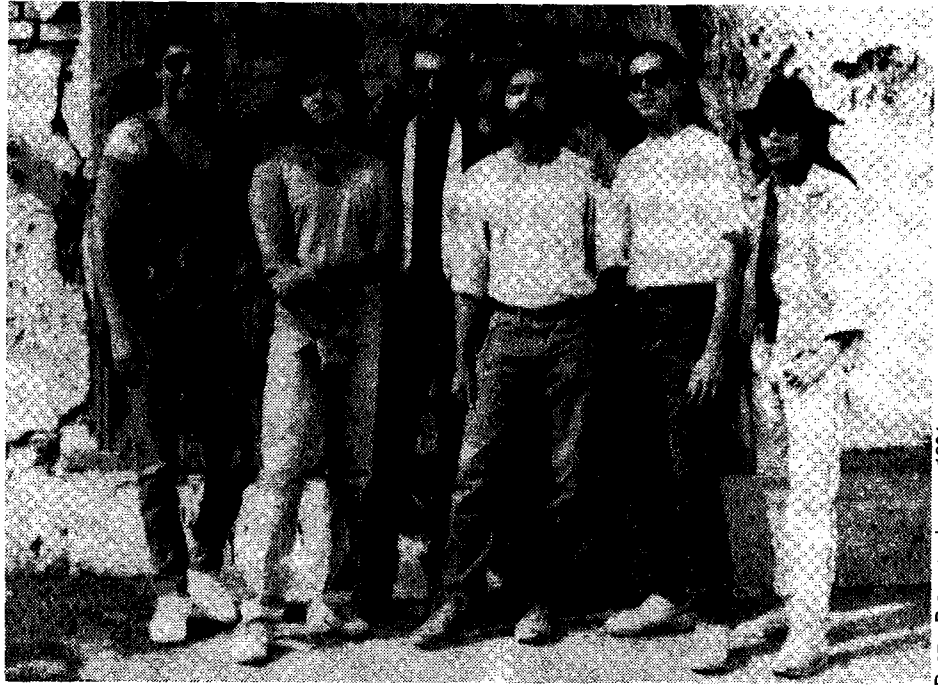
ZUBIN BALAPORIA
Keyboard player with
India's leading rock band

Zubin Balaporia plays the keyboard with India's leading rock group, *Indus Creed* (formerly called *Rock Machine*). The 6-member group, formed in 1984 has toured the length and breadth of India, represented India at the Festival of India in the Russia, toured the UK and performed with rock groups *Europe* and *Bon Jovi* to 40,000 fans in Mumbai.

Their debut album *Rock-n-roll Renegade* (CBS) was the largest-selling rock album in India, while the video of the same name, earned the group the honor of becoming the first Indian artistes on MTV. Their song *Pretty Child* won MTV's Video Music Award - Asian Viewer's Choice, in Los Angeles in 1993. Their video *Trapped* entered the Asian Top 20 on Asian Channel V and was nominated by MTV for its Asian Viewer's Choice Award, while *Sleep* was nominated for its Indian Viewers Choice award for 1996.

MTV has produced a 'Rockumentary' on Indus Creed, the first for a non-western act. Last year, Indus Creed was awarded Asian TV Channel V's "Best Indian Band" award.

A multi-talented musician and performer, Balaporia has directed, performed and produced over 1,000 jingles for TV worldwide; produced



Top, Zubin Balaporia (2nd from right) with the rock band Indus Creed. Below, the Divya jazz group, with Dinshah Sanjana (4th from left) and vocalist, his wife Sandhya (2nd from left).

and performed in musicals (Sound of Music, My Fair Lady and others); and provided the music for Zoroastrian Studies audio cassettes [see page 35]. [From Zubin Balaporia through Shehnaz Munshi]. ■

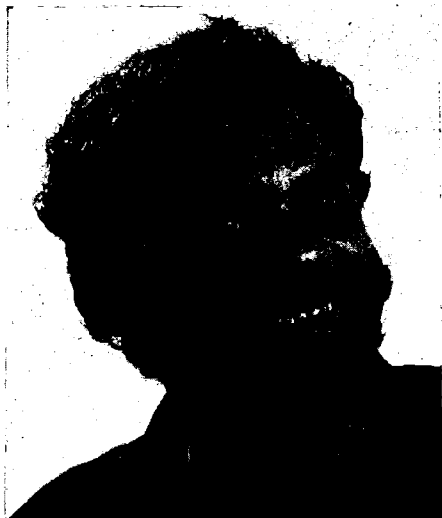
RONNIE DESAI
Singer and songwriter

Ronnie Desai who has been described as the "Bob Dylan of India" has recorded a number of albums, marketed by CBS, among

them *Bad Company* and *Bedlam*. Influenced by folk music, Ronnie composed and sang songs - like Dylan - about love and life.

A science graduate from the Jai Hind College, Desai now 45, started his musical career by forming a band called Joint Cooperation with his schoolmates. The Rolling Stones, the Beatles and The Who were the major influences for the band.

Desai has also worked as a copywriter with leading advertising agen-



cies in Mumbai, and with the contacts that he built up, started to compose jingles for their ads. [From *Parsiana*, February 1988. ■

GARY LAWYER Singer and composer

Singer, songwriter and composer **Gary Lawyer** (whose real name is Rohinton) is into every type of music – rock, jazz, pop and ballads, and also writes and sings jingles for many major companies.

On MTV's prime slot reserved for rare rockers, Lawyer featured regularly with his *Nights on Fire*. Earlier albums, *This cannot wait* and *High Standards* won him the tag of "India's answer to Jim Morrison". A semi-professional recording made while on a stint in the US in the 1980s, won him a recording contract with India's EMI/HMV. Lawyer's *The Other Side of Dawn*, recorded in New York with an American producer, "hit the stands with a bang" notes India's *Blitz* which pronounced him "a star in the wings." Gary, a bass baritone, who can sing in the tenor range, has performed in major cities in India and Russia.

While on stage, Lawyer, shirt wringing with sweat, gyrates, twists and twirls his pelvis, to the pounding music, at home he has the clean-cut scrubbed look of the boy next door. Describing himself as a responsible, religious man, who says his kushti prayers 3 times a day, he is still a part of the family's sandalwood business which has been running for generations. [From "The Music that Cannot Wait" by Jeroo Irani, *Parsiana*, June 1988 and March 1993]. ■

DINSHAH SANJANA Jazz musician

One of India's best known and most talented of jazz exponents and composers, **Dinshah Sanjana** and his band *Divya* have been performing at international jazz festivals. From childhood Sanjana pursued music with a passion and commitment. The

piano was his mode of expression but he also learnt how to play the guitar and the tabla. He started on the piano at five, playing classical music. In his teens he was into rock music and grew up with the Beatles and Rolling Stones, until he discovered his niche in jazz. In 1978 he started his first jazz band, *Holy Smoke*. A series of other bands followed: *Tryst* in 1980, the *Ji-Whiz* band in 1983 with whom he recorded an album in Holland, *Ultimatum* in 1985 and finally *Divya* in 1987.

Success came to *Divya* almost immediately when it was selected as one of 10 finalists at the ninth Belgian International Jazz Concert in 1987. From here on the world was their stage and they performed at international jazz festivals in Europe, Russia, USA, the Far East and India.

Probably the oldest form of jazz is Indian classical music, according to Sanjana, "Both are about ad-libbing and playing the moment." In fact a distinguishing feature of Sanjana's music is that it has undertones of Indian classical music; and the lead 'instrument' of *Divya* is Sanjana's wife Sandhya who is a keen student and exponent of North Indian classical music.

"The problem with jazz is that it is not music for the masses," says Sanjana, "It is intellectual and does not have a large audience." Jazz musicians, thus, cannot expect to live by their music alone. Sanjana's commercial enterprise is composing and recording advertising jingles at his personal recording studio which is reportedly one of the best in the country and housed in a soundproof room at his residence. He has composed and recorded over 2,000 jingles.

One of Sanjana's greatest influences has been his late father Minoo. "He was the jazz musician of medicine. He studied and practiced homeopathy, allopathy and ayurvedic medicine and mixed all the disciplines in his profession, as we do in jazz. He was my hero." [Excerpted from "All that jazz" by Gustasp Irani, *Parsiana* February 1994]. ■



The Shah Nameh opens like a cosmogony of the creation of the world – with several verses in praise of the Holy God, and the gift of wisdom; and continues with praises for the creation of the earth, sky, animal and vegetable kingdom; the creation of man and the creation of the sun and moon.

The mythical age represented in the Shah Nameh is the pre-historic period introducing the first man – Kayumars and the beginnings of a structured hierarchical society.

THE PESHDIANIAN DYNASTY:

King Kayumars (also referred to as Gayomard in the Pahlavi scriptures) is said to be the first man in the world to establish the institution of kingship. He commanded great respect from all human beings in his mountainous domain and administered guidance and justice to all his subjects and living creatures. In due time Kayumars received a revelation from Ahura Mazda through his Archangel Sarosh Yazad, and thus began the practice of monotheism by mankind. Until that time mankind was

in awe of natural phenomena and worshiped creations like the seas, mountains trees, etc. He was also endowed by the divine 'farr', a glory reserved for great kings.

The King's foremost pride and joy was his son **Siamak**. The malevolent Ahriman, who detested everything noble and good, envied Kayumars'

sovereignty and with the help of his own ruthless son Siyah, plotted against the monarch. As fate would have it, Sarosh Yazad appeared before Kayumars and revealed to him the enmity of Ahriman and his son Siyah who would destroy Siamak. The brave and noble Siamak ventured to fight his father's adversary, but was killed by sheer trickery in an unfair combat.

exhorted him to avenge his son Siamak's death. Siamak's son Hushang, commanded an army with his grandfather Kayumars against Siyah. This army included wild and tame animals such as lions, leopards, wolves and birds. Hushang demolished and killed Ahriman's son Siyah and avenged his father's death. Soon afterwards, Kayumars passed away after a reign of thirty years leaving

the crown to his worthy grandson Hushang.

King Hushang ruled for forty years with wisdom and justice. He was the first person known to extract iron from stone and establish the manufacture of implements such as axe, saw and chisel.. He diverted waters from the rivers into the fields, making agriculture possible through proper irrigation. (Prior to this human beings subsisted on fruits). He encouraged taming and breeding of utility animals. He was the first man to discover fire, quite by accident. One day he was walking up the mountains with

his companions, when a huge serpent approached him swiftly in a menacing fashion. Instinctively, he picked up a boulder and threw it at the creature. The serpent writhed and moved aside, causing the rock to strike a boulder and spark off a conflagration. All present stood in awe. Hushang bowed down before the fire

STORIES FROM THE SHAH NAMEH Part 1 Peshdanian Dynasty By Khorshed Jungalwala



*The court of Jamsheed. Painted by Soltan Mohammad c. 1520-30.
[From The Lion and the Throne: Stories from the Shahnameh of Firdausi, Volume 1.]*

Now in the dirt he lay the king's son low
Clawed at his gut and struck the fatal blow
So perished Siamak – a demon's hand
Left leaderless his people and his land.
- Ehsan Yarshater - Dick Davis

For a year Kayumars and his subjects mourned Siamak's death, when Sarosh Yazad appeared again and

The next fifty years were spent in regulating the classification of

- Ehsan Yarshater - Dick Davis

*You see, in the final analysis,
It is between you and God;
It never was between you and them –
Anyway. - Submitted by Mehran Sepehri*

Review by Jehangir S. Pocha
North Andover, Massachusetts

Perhaps Shapurji Saklatvala (1874-1936) suffers from the ignominy of being third in a winner obsessed society. As the third Indian (and third Parsi) after Dadabhai Nawroji and Mancherjee Bhownagree to be elected to the British House of Commons, this fascinating and enigmatic man who rattled Westminster with his withering criticisms of the colonial-capitalistic British system, 'deserves more attention than history is paying him.

Aristocrat, leftist, pious Zarathushti, Christian convert, godless communist, anglophile, Indian nationalist — Saklatvala went by several, often contradictory, labels. Marc Wadsworth's book *Comrade Sak* chronicles the political life of a man born into wealth and privilege (his father Dorabji had married Jamshedji Tata's sister, Jerbai) and who died a staunch (and as we will see, feared) communist.

As a young manager at Tatas, Shapur, as he referred to himself in true egalitarian manner, was a favorite of his uncle's and could have been a contender to head Tatas (an honor that eventually went to his uncle Naoroji Saklatvala who preceded JRD Tata as chairman of Tata Sons). But like many passionate young men of his generation Shapur was instinctively drawn more to social and political issues than business ones. When rivalries within Tatas after Jamshedji Tatas death in 1904 (a period which Wadsworth covers briefly but surprising well) found him being posted (read banished) to England, he began an association with the Liberal party. While in England, he also met and married Sally Marsh, a working class Englishwoman and Wadsworth states it was through the life of her family that Shapur saw the grim reality of "the real, working England" for the first time.

Shapur's view of the exploitative nature of British capitalism, initially



Saklatvala, wife Sally and children at the home of his cousin Ratan Tata, c.1912.

COMRADE SAK SHAPURJI SAKLATVALA, MP A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

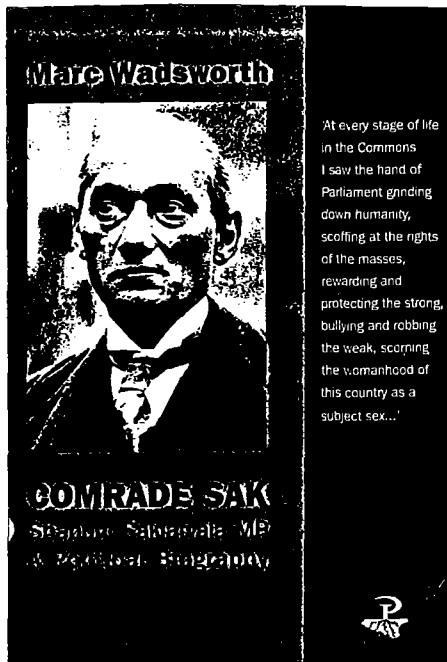
By Marc Wadsworth

Published by Peepal Tree Press Ltd., England., ISBN 0-948833-77-7, softcover, 202 pp, US\$20, 1998.

formed in India, grew harder in this time and he found himself being drawn to the Communist party which he later joined.

Comrade Sak, which races through Shapur's early years as though they were of perfunctory importance, really begins only at this point. Time-flight, which encapsulates the first 30 odd years of Shapur's life into some 10 pages, slows, and Wadsworth begins his detailed account of Shapur's political activities in the UK as he traces Shapur's rise, rule and fading as one of Britain's most significant Communist spokespersons.

Aptly subtitled "A Political Biography", *Comrade Sak* is an honest, well researched and competent, if somewhat dispassionate, account of an apparently passionate, articulate and complex man, that traces his political life with great alacrity as it comprehensively journals his contributions to leftist cause. High on accuracy while low on humor *Comrade Sak* illustrates how this emigré Parsi Indian aristocrat metamorphosed into a Communist spokesperson of international importance, got elected to British parliament from the famously 'red' district of Battersea North and used his seat on the backbenches to



Above, *Comrade Sak* book cover
Right, Caricature from *Punch*, 1928

speak bravely for the two causes most dear to his heart – Indian nationalism and workers' rights.

In the two years Sak spent in parliament, 1924 and 1926, he (through his League Against Imperialism) almost single-handedly forced the issues of Asian and African independence and workers rights onto the British political agenda (much to the consternation of the Tatas, partly dependent as they were on British largesse for their continued growth). As one of the most articulate, compelling and passionate spokespersons for these causes, Shapur established close relationships with John Archer the pan-Africanist, Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. Though initially warm, relations with the Mahatma became strained as Shapur accused him of ignoring labor issues in India to appease his industrial bankrollers (e.g. Birla and Bajaj). "Almost all Indian politicians, including Mr. Gandhi, do not care for Indian (industrial) workers" he wrote almost prophetically in 1930. Yet he remained a figure of such influence and stature at home that after his one barnstorming visit in 1927 where he advocated his brand of militant trade unionism to hugely receptive audi-



ences, he was banned from further entry into India.

Perhaps it was this focus on overseas issues led to voters rejecting him in subsequent elections, and this led to his gradual decline within the party. Outside parliament Shapur continued to contest (and lose) elections with great fervor and led the Communists party's verbal assault on the Tory-Liberal-Labor establishment with such ferocity ("I am out for a revolution and am quite prepared to be shot down") that he was banned from entry into a number of countries, including the United States and his own native India. Such was his working commitment to the cause of the labor movement that most of his colleagues and family are united in their assessment that he died prematurely essentially due to strain and overwork.

Yet, as Wadsworth notes, Shapur was never appointed to any national position within the Communist Party of Great Britain. Perhaps it was race. Wadsworth suggests that it was because his comrades assessed him to be a remarkable orator with a keen intellect and a wry, almost cynical sense of humor (when asked what he thought of the Indian Civil Service,

he replied "It is neither Indian, nor civil") but with a limited theoretical understanding of the communist ideology. To him he was their lightening rod more than their grand Oracle.

This is probably true as Shapur's communism stemmed more from his humanity than his economic beliefs. And this is why Wadsworth's exclusive focus on Shapur's political life seems self-defeating and myopic, denying us any meaningful insight into the genesis of his thinking. (Though in Chapter 1 Wadsworth does explain the circumstances which he suspects caused the Saklatvala's to feel financially cheated by the Tata's and which in part could explain Shapur's determination to get workers their just dues from capitalists). After reading the book one feels like one knows Saklatvala and his politics, not that one understands them.

The fact that *Comrade Sak* is written almost entirely in third person and lacks any dramatization whatsoever, is also disappointing. Sometimes we wonder why we are loaded with insignificant facts (though Wadsworth ignores some important dimensions to Shapur's life he does provide us with the names of the three dasturji's who performed the Saklatvala children's navjote!) and introduced to such a plethora of insignificant characters. Who cares about Arthur Field "an influential Battersea socialist" no less, when it would have been so much more fun and illustrative if, for example, Wadsworth had juxtaposed Shapur with a famous contemporary, the arch-imperialist Winston Churchill whose views were so diametrically opposed to Shapur's.

Wadsworth's own leftist views come through loud and clear, and in parts *Comrade Sak* is a rather drab read except for those interested in the minutiae of the British Communist politics of the 1920's and 1930's, for whom the book seems to have been written anyway.

Why then do I recommend that any of you, gentle readers, read the book?

HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANS IN Kerman IN RECENT CENTURIES

By Jamshid Soroush Soroushian

In Farsi. Order online from the Store at Jamshid Varza's web journal on Zoroastrian heritage at www.vohuman.org

Review by Jamshid Varza
Palo Alto, California



The author. To a student of the Zarathushti religion, Jamshid Soroush Soroushian is a highly respected name, for his knowledge of Zarathushti Persian

literature and history. Reputed historian Mary Boyce dedicates her major work *A History of Zoroastrianism [Volume 1, E. J. Brill]* to Jamshid Soroush Soroushian of Kerman. In a later book *[A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism, Oxford University Press]* Boyce expresses her gratitude to Soroushian for his help and patience with west-

ern scholars and for providing all the services at his disposal to facilitate their work. Janet Kastenbergh in her recent book *[Zoroastrians of Iran: Conversion, Assimilation or Persistence, AMS Press]* expresses her gratitude to Jamshid Soroushian for his guidance and deep knowledge of the subject. Emeritus Professor Bastani Pareezi, a reputed Iranian historian, in the preface to Soroushian's *History*, writes: "Outside scholarly circles, Jamshid Soroushian is a prominent figure ... whose contributions and services to the Zarathushti community of Iran are well known. He is also a popular figure amongst the people of his hometown, Kerman, where they usually call him Arbab Shah Jamshid. He founded an annual conference to study the

For one, the real wealth of the book lies in the Appendix where Shapur's significant speeches, articles and letters are re-produced. Reading the pristine prose, precise thinking, unflinching passion and genuine humanity in these lines affirms Shapur's greatness to the reader. His words remind us that "the goals of ending inequality and making possible human liberation are too important to be consigned to historical memory."

Secondly, what makes the life of Shapur particularly relevant to us all was that despite being a 'Black MP' in a white country, he maintained his deep sense of family, religion, ethnicity and remained committed to his roots even as these posed painful (finally insurmountable) impediments to his goals. Though Tatas strived to distance themselves from him, his Indian-ness made him the brunt of overt racism and his religiosity made him suspect to fellow communists, Shapur was a man who in greater part managed to straddle many diverse (even contra-

dictory) worlds with dignity, grace and wisdom.

A complex man not easily understood, Shapur Saklatvala deserves greater understanding and recognition amongst the Zoroastrian community today for he was a man who lived by his religion and who exemplified the values and principles of our faith. A refined and sensitive human being with many qualities of head and heart, he surrendered wealth and power to pursue his desire to help establish what was in his eyes, a fairer, more just system of governance in the world with passion and integrity. He is worthy of our remembrance.

[Further reading: "The Fifth Commandment" a chronicle of his life by daughter Sehri Saklatvala.]. ■

Jehangir S. Pocha is marketing manager with Datawatch Corporation in Massachusetts, and until recently, Director of Marketing, FTP Software (Asia Pacific) in Singapore.

culture and history of Kerman – the *Kerman Shenasi* conference." Even in his post-retirement years, Soroushian continued to be active, authoring books and articles on a variety of Zarathushti topics.



The book. *History* is a valuable source for the first hand history of the Zarathushtis of Kerman in recent centuries. Jamshid, his father Soroush Soroushian and grandfather Shahriar

Khodabaksh all served as heads of the Zarathushti Anjuman in Kerman. This book gives detailed accounts of the people and their lives prior to the removal of the *jizya*, the headtax assigned to all non-Muslims.

Throughout its history Kerman has hosted a large Zarathushti population, at least until the end of the Safavid dynasty. Despite difficult living conditions, the *jizya* tax and many other forms of social and economic discrimination, the Kermani Zarathushtis had fairly prosperous lives. Due to regional wars this population was reduced significantly and suffered a great deal more under later regimes.

History, for the first time, publishes documents by the Zarathushti Anjuman describing their intolerable living conditions, giving evidence of economic discrimination, beatings, rapes and forced conversions. Later chapters contain an account of Maneckji Hateria's travel to Kerman and his contributions to the community.

Jamshid Soroushian has published widely in Farsi. Among his works are: Firdowsi's *Shah Nameh* and the *Achaemenians*; *Education in the Zarathushti Religion*; and *Water and Cleanliness amongst Iranian Zarathushtis*. Every Zarathushti library should have a copy of this historical and original work, by a most remarkable man. ■

An active member of the Zarathushti community of California, **Jamshid Varza** is creator of the www.Vohuman.Org web journal and teaches Zarathushti youth at Sunday school.

**Three Prayers
and the
Name of God**

By
Dina G. McIntyre

A Commentary

By Kersey H. Antia
Orland Park, Illinois

This book is available from the author to whomever is interested in her own free and liberal version of our three basic prayers – *Ashem Vohu*, *Ahunavar* and *Yenghahe* (and not *Yenghe*) *Hataam*. She admits her views are very liberal and not all may agree with her interpretations.

Dina's abiding interest in our religion came somewhat as a surprise to me initially, as I had known her family – her father, Sir Jehangir (Joe) Gandhi being the managing director of Tata Iron and Steel Co. who interviewed me for my first ever job and her uncle, Khushru, was my very first boss, all devoted Zarathushtis who were, however, too preoccupied with their work to delve into religion. But when she told me she is the granddaughter of P. N. Mehta, founder of Boys Town in Nasik, whom I saw as a teenager many times with Dastur Bode, presiding over his liberal-minded lectures at K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai, I was not at all surprised that some of his religious but liberal zeal, so unprecedented among the 'sethias' of his times, luckily lives on in her.

Dina observes: "The religion for many centuries, was in the hands of

THREE PRAYERS AND THE NAME OF GOD

By Dina G. McIntyre

26 pages, softcover, 1999. Published by the Gatha Studies Trust, 1806 Park Circle Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116, tel: (412) 486-8825.

The author writes:

"Some months ago, my son, Rich, asked me to give him 'a couple of prayers with meanings'. So I started to work on a little piece for him, and thought I would make it into a booklet as a special gift for him. This booklet is the result ... As with everything of Zarathushtra's, the more I worked on it, the more enchanted I became with his profound and original thinking. The conclusions I have come to are not in accord with Zarathushti ideas of the last few centuries, so you may not like it. But I have to go where the evidence leads me. I cannot compromise with the truth as I understand it (not knowingly, anyway). And to me, the result is infinitely more lovely than today's conventional wisdom on the subject.

"Rich suggested that I make this booklet available to others. So I have made up a lot of extra copies, for whoever might like one. There is no charge. I just hope you enjoy it."



souls who were not enlightened, who made political compromises, who turned it into a profit-making institution, a control mechanism, and who were not able to grasp, and therefore maintain, the pure, spiritual truths that Zarathushtra taught." This sad state of affairs was accentuated by the invasion of Iran by Alexander, "mistakenly called the Great" and the Arabs. Since many scholars presumed that such lofty thoughts could not have possibly prevailed in Zarathushtra's prehistoric times, they did not endeavor to grasp the deeply spiritual and metaphysical meanings of his teachings.

"But the ultimate betrayal," she contends, "has occurred at the hands of some present-day Zoroastrians who expound the view that the Gathas are 'mere poetry' and 'just ethics' which indicates how little they understand them." One scholar I know has even described the Gathas as 'convoluted' in its linguistic style.

These three most important prayers in our religion, are according to McIntyre, "not addressed to God, which is the conventional notion of prayer" but are rather "manthras, little nuggets of wisdom with many layers of meaning which are revealed when you let your mind play over

them", their main function being Zen-style revelation of the truth we need for spiritual growth.

McIntyre's translations, rather her interpretations (as she does not profess to be conversant with Avesta) are based mostly on Insler and may sound different from the traditional ones, but in essence they are not, for she explains many things in modernistic ways that often bear out the essential truths lying hidden in the traditional interpretations.

Even as a keen student of the religion and Avesta-Pahlavi from my childhood, it took me a long while to figure out why *Yenghahe Hatam* is our third most important prayer. It finally dawned on me that in it, more than the Greeks or any so-called founders of western civilization, Zarathushtra emphasized the role of man and woman in this world. The Greeks were still hung up then on many beliefs in the supernatural. Zarathushtra is thus the real founder of our modern civilization, because he perceived man and woman as the direct agents of God (or Satan) on this earth. You see the reflections of it even in the *Shah Nameh* when Firdowsi admonishes us that if we follow the Good Law and do good, we could be angelic like the King Fereydoon.

In my opinion, the importance of Yenghahe Hatam cannot be overemphasized. Zatspram [Selections of Zatspram, 35, 1-2] as late as in the ninth century echoes and even elaborates on the sentiments expressed in Yenghahe Hatam: "We are seven Ameshaspands – ageless and deathless ... and when you who are men become one in thought, word and deed, then will you become ageless and free from sickness, knowing neither corruption nor decay, even as we Ameshaspands are." The Pahlavi Rivayet accompanying the Datastan i Denik also assures us that after the resurrection "Ohrmazd and the Ameshaspands and all Yazads and me will be together" [XLVIII, B. N. Dhabhar, 1911, pp. 99-107].

This prompted Mary Boyce to observe: "Zoroaster was thus the first to teach the doctrines of an individual judgment, heaven and hell, the future resurrection of the body, the general last judgment and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body. These doctrines were to become familiar articles of faith to much of mankind, through borrowing by Judaism, Christianity and Islam; yet it is in Zoroastrianism itself that they have their fullest logical coherence." [Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians, their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 1979, p. 29].

If we meditate over these three basic prayers we will discover how much they have contributed to modern religious thought and how much the latter bears out their eternal and universal truth.

McIntyre's booklet will appeal very much to those given to reflection and meditation over our basic prayers and those needing assurance that our prayers are second to none.

The author needs to be congratulated for this labor of love for her own son, which may prove useful to others as well. How one wishes her example will inspire our youth to study our noble heritage and leave the traces of their own fruitful search for future generations. ■

Our 30th Anniversary Cookbook



The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia

This delightful compilation of favorite recipes contributed by members of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia features a cross-section of Parsi and Iranian recipes. From Nergish Patel's *aletty paletty* (spicy chicken livers) and Coomy Canteenwalla's *patrel* (rolled in taro leaves) to Kashmira Dastur's *malido* and Homai Wadia's carrot *barfi*, all the recipes are adapted to North American ingredients.

There are some delectable contributions from the Iranian ladies, including Manijeh Rahnamoon's *fesanjon*

OUR 30th ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK

Compiled by The Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia

Softcover, 64 pp, 1998, \$8 (plus \$3 S&H). Order from Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia, 900 Halifax Street, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5B 2R5, Tel: (604) 420-3500. All proceeds will benefit ZSBC.

(cooked in walnut and pomegranate paste) and Iran Bakhtian's *khoresh badenjan* (eggplant stew).

Basics like *dhansakh*, *masoor*, *vindaloo*, curry rice, *dhandal*, *patio* and *khichri* make this a valuable guide for the novice cook, while the more seasoned may enjoy trying out their versions of *kid gosht*, *khuhria* (trotters), *patra-ni-machi*, *dal ni pori* and *lagan nu custard*.

With its whimsical line drawings by ZSBC children, this book makes a handsome addition to any kitchen. ■

- By Roshan Rivetna

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In 1992, author-historian Paul William Roberts (below) followed the footsteps of the Magi, by car and camel, from Iran to Bethlehem. His startling revelations are documented in his book "Journey of the Magi" and in the upcoming film to be produced by Mehernaz Lentin.

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

**A two hour Christmas
Special produced by
Mehernaz Lentin**

Part travel memoir, part history and part ground-breaking religious scholarship, this documentary, to be shown as a Christmas Special in 1999, based on Paul William Roberts' book "Journey of the Magi: In Search of the Birth of Jesus" hopes to reveal the tremendous influence of the religion of Zarathushtra on "Western" religious thought and civilization.

Toronto-based film producer Mehernaz Lentin envisages *Journey of the Magi* to be "timeless, classic film" that will be sold in every major global market. Based on Paul William Roberts' book *Journey of the Magi: In Search of the Birth of Jesus* [FEZANA Journal, Spring 1996], the film will initially be presented as a two-hour Christmas Special in the year 2000 to audiences in Canada, and possibly UK and US.

To date, Lentin has received confirmed support from Canada (Telefilm Canada, Vision TV and private investors), and strong interest from UK (BBC and ITV) and USA (ABC, Diane Sawyer of 20/20, and National Geographic). Lentin is also negotiating non-theatrical distribution to schools, colleges, museums, cultural and religious institutions. She plans to use state of the art techniques to incorporate interactive TV capabilities.

The book. In his book, Roberts documents his journey in 1993, from Tehran to Bethlehem, following, by camel and car, in the footsteps of the magi (Zarathushti priests) or 'the three wise men' of Matthew's gospel.

FEZANA JOURNAL - SUMMER 1999



Not only does Roberts claim to have found the magi's "castle of the fire-worshippers" recorded by the 13th century Marco Polo, he also turns up some of the most intriguing information on the formation of our western civilization and religions. He claims to have found the "real root of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the ancient Persian tradition of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the magi."

On the Web. In 1997, Bill Gates read *Journey* and commissioned Paul Roberts to travel with a crew of three to Iran, Syria and Israel for their on-line internet adventure magazine at www.mungopark.com. It turned out to be a huge success – not only was it Microsoft's second most popular web site, Roberts' book was made accessible to a global audience.

The film. The film, hosted and narrated by Roberts, opens with a Christmas pageant scene in a school gymnasium. Viewers are then transported to the Iranian city of Saveh on the Silk Road and Marco Polo's account of the tomb of the "three kings" who attended the birth of Christ. The story that unfolds includes elements of the traditional Christmas nativity tale along with its link to the religion of Zarathushtra. Further along the Silk Route we find evidence of connections between this area and King Solomon of the Bible.

In Yazd, Roberts visits Zarathushtis and their temple, and using some old and new footage of rites and ceremonies, relates the history of the faith and its profound influence on Judeo-Christianity. The draft script treatment at this point reads:

"He (Zarathushtra) taught of one supreme God, Ahura Mazda, source of all goodness and righteousness, creator of the universe and every-

thing in it. Ahura Mazda's universe is in a spiritual form, yet it contains two entities who make deliberate choices, according to their nature, between good and evil ...

"In its purest form, Zoroastrianism is an extremely attractive faith, which is why it was marginalized by the religions that based much of their theology on Zoroaster's original teachings and then claimed it as their own unique revelations."

He mentions Parsis: "Like the Jews in diaspora, they prospered at times, and at times suffered ... the bond of a deeply cherished religion has ensured that they number among the wealthy and accomplished five percent of any population."

Traveling through Susa, Roberts talks about Darius and King Solomon's temple and Persian emperor Cyrus' conquest of Babylon. "It is Cyrus who decrees that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt," reads the

“ (Roberts) claims to have found the real root of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the ancient Persian tradition of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the magi. ”

draft, "for which he is declared Messiah by the great unknown prophet known as Second Isaiah."

With the new Temple (built under Darius, conqueror or

Egypt) "the Jews seem to have acquired a new religion, one infused with the rich theology of Zoroastrianism, with its sophisticated concepts of good and evil, and its orderly view of a cosmos evolving toward a known end ..."

Roberts travels to the once-great Babylon, Palmyra, Damascus, the bare cliffs of Qumran (that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls where Zoroastrian influence is evident in the Manual of Discipline and the War of Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness), then on to Jerusalem (where he finds King Herod and comes to understand the nature of the connections between Persia and the Jews) and finally, on Christmas eve arriving in Bethlehem.

Budget for Journey of the Magi.

Production budget for the film is \$1.4 million CND. To date Lentin has raised \$50,000 to cover the cost of development. Lentin and UK co-partner (Cafe Productions) are "extremely confident" about raising over 85% of the production financing. She is now looking for the Zarathushti community to help in raising the 15% (or \$150,000) deficit. This can be in the way of a donation or as "equity participation in the project with a recoupment position of 1st tier to be distributed on a *pro rata pari passu* basis with equity investors." Donation checks may be made out to "Industry Pictures" and mailed to Mehernaz Lentin, 3 Washington Ave, Toronto, ONT M5S 1L1, Tel: (416) 977-6585.

The closing paragraph of the draft treatment reads: "Thus, as Zoroaster taught 3,000 years ago, evil is not the opposite of good, but merely its absence. To combat evil all that is needed is for human beings to do good, just as shadows flee when the sun climbs to its noonday height. All that opposes truth is that which is not true. Our duty as human beings is to differentiate between the two and cling to that reality no matter what."

"This" Roberts tells us, "is now what Christmas means to me." ■

Born in Bombay, **Mehernaz Lentin** came to Toronto in 1969 and worked in real estate for six years. She graduated with a degree in communications from University of Toronto and Humber College and worked at the Canadian Film Center, founded by Norman Jewison (who won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 1999 Academy Awards). She has won several awards for her work as an independent film producer, at the Hamburg, Chicago and Atlantic International Film Festivals. In 1996, she founded her production company, Industry Pictures.

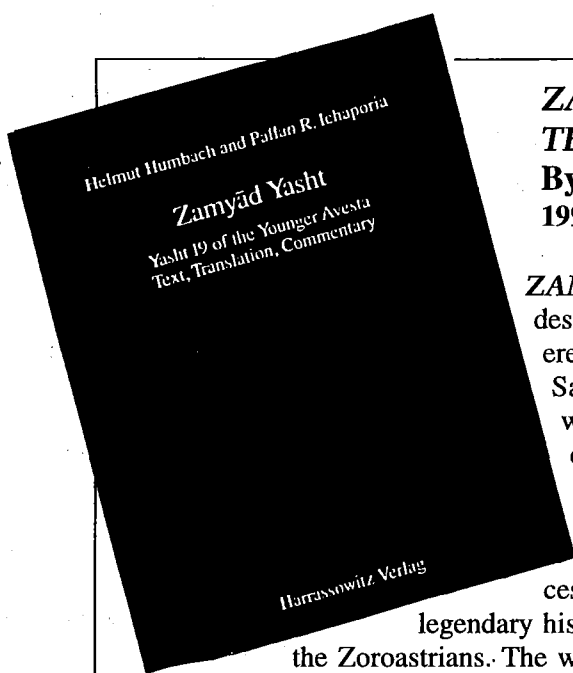
- By Roshan Rivetna

My son, Rich, asked me for "a couple of prayers with meanings." This booklet,

THREE PRAYERS and the NAME OF GOD

was written by me for him and for my other children. It is written at a level for young adults. My son suggested that I also make it available to others. Copies of this booklet are free to anyone wanting one, while supplies last. If you would like a copy, send your name and address (legibly written, please) with \$2.00 for postage and handling, to:

Dina G. McIntyre, 1806 Park Circle Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116



***ZAMYAD YASHT, YASHT 19 OF THE YOUNGER AVESTA
TEXT, TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY AND GLOSSARY
By Helmut Humbach and Pallan Ichaporia
1998, Harrassowitz, Germany***

ZAMYAD YASHT is a history of salvation of the Iranians. It starts with a description of Ahura Mazda's creation of what is good and it ends in Frashokereti, the 'brilliant making of the world', i.e. its perfection and renovation by Saoshyant, the eschatological savior. The main theme is the Kavyan Glory which in the strict sense of the term denotes the glory of the legendary Kavi dynasty up to Vistaspa, the patron of Zarathushtra, but which has a much wider meaning here. Humbach and Ichaporia endeavor to intensify the study of Zamyad Yasht from the historical and philologic points of view, drawing attention to the many actual problems of the text not seen by their predecessors, and emphasizing its intrinsic value as a document of the mythical and

legendary history of the Iranians, as well as its place in the eschatological conception of the Zoroastrians. The work is a contribution to the project "Source de l'histoire de l'Asie centrale preislamique" founded by Janos Harmata (Budapest) and directed by Phillippe Gignoux (Paris) on behalf of the Union Academique Internationale.

"Excellent and thorough. Highest scholarly standard"

- Prof. Werne Sunderman, Professor of Indo-European Languages, Berlin University

"Humbach and Ichaporia's Zamyad Yasht should find its place on the shelves of all Zoroastrians who are serious enough to want to study the textual legacy that is part of their heritage."

- Prof. William Malandra, Professor of Indo-Iranian Philology, University of Minnesota

"... the masterpiece of scholarly work. Zamyad Yasht is highly recommended for laity and scholars."

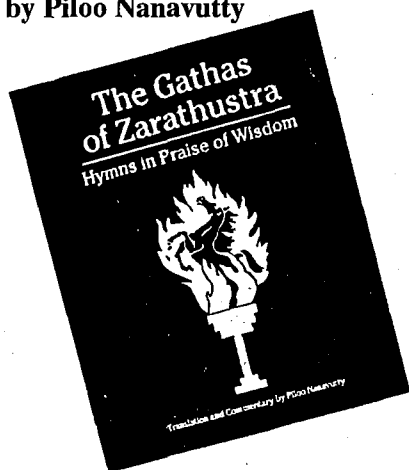
- Prof. Jamsheed Choksy, Professor of Near Eastern Study, Indiana University.

ZAMYAD YASHT is available at \$82.00 per copy on a first come first serve basis. Please make the check in the name of Dr. Pallan R. Ichaporia, and send it to 243 Adams Drive, Womelsdorf, PA 19567.

The Gathas of Zarathushtra

Hymns in Praise of Wisdom

Translation and Commentary
by Piloo Nanavutty



Piloo Nanavutty has both the scholarly training and the felt experiences of a lifetime to correctly interpret the words of Zarathushtra, which have come down through the centuries as seventeen hymns of The Gathas. Her translation is in straightforward, idiomatic English, keeping as close as possible to the original text, while the commentaries elucidate the doctrinal allusions.

Nanavutty presents illustrations to emphasize and explain the text. Background provided by the Story of Creation is examined and a page from an unpublished manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris is reproduced to help comprehension. Vedic parallels are emphasized. The Suggested Reading section and the list of Centers of Excellence will be invaluable to readers wishing to search further.

An ideal book which bridges the line between lay persons and scholars, Gathas is a must for every Zarathushti home and library.

192 pp., illustrated,
hardcover \$22, softcover \$14.95,
ISBN 1-890206-11-3, 1999

To order call 1-800-252-5231

Rohinton Mistry's Long Journey

The film *Such a Long Journey* based on the 1991 book by Bombay-born Canadian author Rohinton Mistry [see *FEZANA Journal*, Spring 1996] won the "Most Popular Canadian Film" award when it debuted at the Vancouver Film Festival last October. It is now playing in theaters in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and other Canadian cities. According to most critics, the film does justice to the award-winning (Books in Canada First Novel award, the Governor-General's Prize, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and a nomination for the prestigious Booker Prize) novel. Some comments on the film are excerpted here.

When director Sturla Gunnarson wanted to film Rohinton

Mistry's novel ... he was puzzled that a blonde Iceland-born Canadian wanted to tell a story about Parsis, a community about which even most Indians know very little.

When the film was screened ... Mistry was relieved to see that Gunnarson ... had captured the chaotic soul of Mumbai in a way few Mumbai-ites could fault. The film, as Gunnarsson says, was, like the novel, "simple, direct and naturalistic."

The year is 1971. A dedicated bank clerk, Gustad Noble (played with sensitivity and, yes, nobility by **Roshan Seth**) does a favor to his old army pal Jimmy Bilimoria (**Naseeruddin Shah**) by agreeing to hide Rs. 60 lakh to help in what seems like a heroic mission. Noble is unwittingly drawn into a network of intrigue when he comes into contact with Ghulam (**Om Puri**), Bilimoria's front man, who likes to operate out of Mumbai's red-light district and chor bazaar.

Noble's family life begins to unravel as well. His promising son Sohrab (Vrajesh Hirjee) leaves home after a row. His wife Dilnavaz (Soni Razdan) is driven to witchcraft with the

help of the upstairs neighbor, the dotty, old Miss Kutpitia (Pearl Padamsee) ...

Mistry's minutely detailed characters also result in stellar performances from **Sam Dastoor** as Dinshawji, Noble's lecherous co-worker and friend, and **Kurush Deboo**, as Tehmul the neighborhood idiot who becomes the sacrificial lamb in Dilnavaz's administration of black magic.



PHOTO: PARSIANA

The film has clearly benefited from the screenplay by Sooni Taraporevala (who wrote the screenplay for *Salaam Bombay*), a Parsi whose contacts opened doors to several otherwise inaccessible locations in Mumbai ...

Anand
Living Media India Ltd.

For all Zarathushtis, a movie worth seeing, with brilliant acting by Roshan Seth – no Parsi actor could have acted better.

Gunnarsson discovered an affinity with the Parsis through his own heritage. He says: "There are 300,000 Icelanders in Iceland and we're an ancient tribe. There are 130,000 Parsis in the world and they're an ancient tribe."

Mehernosh Masters
Toronto, Ontario

Recently my wife and I saw *Such a Long Journey* and both of us loved it. It transported us back to Bombay where we are from originally. The director Sturla Gunnarsson is brilliant, and no Parsi could have played Gustad Noble better than Roshan Seth. Of course, the book is by low-profile but brilliant author Rohinton Mistry. I appeal and urge all Parsis to read the book and see the movie. I'm sure everyone will just love it ...

Aspi Kootar
Ontario, Canada

We are writing to express our anger on the release of the film ... Its content is nothing less than an insult to the intelligence and honor of the Zarathushti descendants of ancient Persia ... the Parsis portrayed in this film degrade the values of the religious teachings of Asho Zarathushtra, practice pagan rituals and indulge in corruption and debauchery ...

If, in fact, the behaviors portrayed in *Journey* are based on events that the author recalls from his experience in India, it is a sorry reflection on Parsis and makes me question the value of the community's survival.

Zarathushtis are in desperate need of a renaissance. They need to re-discover the nobility of Zarathushtra's teachings and renew their pride in their heritage. Instead *Journey* demonstrates to the world the community's lowest common denominators. How embarrassing, how disappointing ...

Perhaps in future efforts Mr. Mistry will redeem himself by making an effort to inspire the community.

Jehangir M. Panthaky
Burnaby, British Columbia

...We get to see a small slice in the life of a Parsi family in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual India.

The film was fun, and funny and sad all jumbled up. It also was in many ways an interesting and plausible view of Indian and Parsi society, problems, tensions, wishes and prejudices as it does exist for many in our community ...

For those looking for Parsi glory, you will not find it in this story. It makes no attempt to be flattering, but I believe it is fair ...

Perhaps it would have been a little more plausible and enjoyable without the exaggerated and totally unbelievable character of the 'baug' idiot and the office fool, and the other fools in the movie ...

On the whole we enjoyed the film a lot and I would personally recommend it to others.

However, it is not quite appropriate for a younger audience. At one point my 16-year-old son quickly covered my eight-year-old daughter's eyes and continued to do so until the 'adult' part of the scene was over ... I don't know what value is served by these types of scenes, explicitly sexual or exceptionally violent or just plain vulgar. I would not consider them 'adult' scenes - they do not add any value to the storyline whatsoever. It seems movie-makers are intent on getting the PG or AA rating, nowadays one can find hardly any good movies that fall into the category of 'family' or 'General Audience' ... *Journey* seems to have fallen into this trap, unfortunately, with a couple of scenes that could have been done in better taste.

With these words of caution, I do enjoy Mistry's books, and I do recommend the movie to Zarathushti adults.

Jehangir Bulsara
Ottawa, Ontario

HAVING FUN WITH PARSI SURNAMES

By Dr. Goolcheher D. Coyaji

Softcover, 36 pp., 1998. \$2 (plus \$1 S&H). Available from Dr. Phiroz Dastoor,, 10 Willowridge #517, Etobicoke, ON M9R 3Y8, Tel: (416) 242-7433.



Mrs. "Petit" and Mrs. "Mota"

In this delightful booklet, Goolcheher Coyaji, a noted physician of Pune, India, has compiled a list of over 1,000 Parsi surnames, from Aasha and Acharya to Zaroliwala and Zaveri as well as lists of Parsi boys' (Adil, Ader, Astad to Zareer and Zubin) and girls' (from Aban and Arnavaz to Zenobia and Zerina) first names.

Illustrated with topical cartoons by Niloufer Wadia and an introduction giving the history and genesis of Parsi names by Phiroz N. Dastoor of Toronto, this booklet is an interesting vignette of Parsiana.

Directory of Zarathushtis in Pakistan

The Karachi Zarathushti Banu Mandal has published an updated Address & Telephone Directory of all Zarathushtis residing in Pakistan. This time there is an addition of ex-Karachi-ites, now residing elsewhere who have email. It is available for Rs. 200 from Toxy Cowasjee in Karachi, tel: 586-7088 or email: toxy@cyber.net.pk. Individuals should request friends or family to purchase it in Karachi rather than send dollars.

Visit KZBM's new web site at <http://www.aahung.com/banumandal>

READERS' FORUM

This column is a forum to present information and opinions. Letters (under 600 words) may be submitted to the Editor. The Journal reserves the right to edit all materials for clarity and space.

On recent issues ...

I read with much interest the Winter 1999 issue of FEZANA Journal, edited by Dr. Pallan Ichaporia. My warmest congratulations on presenting an extremely interesting and above all skillfully well-balanced review of Zoroastrian scriptures.

*Dr. Mario Vitalone
Istituto Universitario Orientale
Napoli, Italy*

I find the articles very interesting and it is a pleasure to read about the progress of our community. Congratulations to your team.

*Freny Cooper
Devon, UK*

Thank you very much. Through FEZANA Journal I got in touch with a family who shared the same name as mine; and they happen to be my relatives. FEZANA is wonderful!

*Roshni Khory Herbert
Largo, Florida*

I am thrilled to receive the Spring 1999 issue of FEZANA Journal. I congratulate you on producing such an absorbing number of articles relevant to all Zarathushtis. I was most moved by the revelations of Khurshed Bapasola and young Aysha Ghadiali ...

When I was a little girl of four (I am now 85) I had an intense curiosity about religion and a hunger for explanation.

"Mummy, I know you are here because I can touch you," I said, "You have a face, eyes, nose, mouth. How do I know if Dadaji (Ahura Mazda) lives if I can't see Him or feel Him?" Mother tried very hard to explain. It was a burning hot afternoon in Uttar Pradesh. We were travelling in a hackney coach drawn by two horses, proceeding from one village to another. Father, a District Magistrate and a member of the

Indian Civil Service, moved from village to village on horseback. Mother's efforts to explain the reality of God were fruitless. I was not convinced. She sent up a silent prayer for divine help.

Suddenly a cool, gentle breeze sprang up from heaven knows where. The horses neighed, the coachman got down from his perch and put up the flaps so that we could enjoy the breeze. I still recall the gleam of triumph in mother's eyes as she turned to me and said:

"Can you see that breeze? Does it have a nose, mouth, eyes? Do you know where it comes from? Do you know where it is going?"

"No, Mummy."

"Well, then?"

"Oh, is Dadaji like that?"

"Yes," said Mother.

For the rest of the journey I was quiet, absorbed in thought ...

*Piloo N. Jungalwalla
New Delhi, India*

I received the Spring issue. It is excellent.

*Michael Stausberg
Uppsala University, Sweden*

Thank you for putting together such a fabulous magazine, which I am sure is looked forward to, all over the world, even more than *Time* magazine or *McLean*, at least by us Zarathushtis. I always get carried away reading it page by page and last night it was 4:00 am by the time I finished reading the Spring issue.

I loved Cyrus Rivetna's article "My Parsi Heritage Revisited". It brought back a lot of memories about our Dadar agiary, gymkhana and five gardens where we all spent some of the happiest moments of our lives!

*Sheraz Bhesania
Vancouver, BC*

Your editorial about "Indian-Irani-Parsi-American Zarathushti" was very thoughtful. The idea and the question of who we are and where we come from are always a basic struggle for those of us who think about our origins. Another interesting article among many others was that of Aysha Ghadiali about Religion and Identity. Memories of Kerman by Mehran Sepehri took us to our Zarathushti motherland with snapshots of our past.

Jamshed Udvadia's article about standardization of the name of Zarathushtra was quite logical and a good try and I hope I can follow this standard in my writing.

Thank you for your efforts.

*Daryoush Mehrshahi
Sheffield, UK*

On Ohrmazd and Evil

I have always had great respect for the time and effort that you put into publishing each issue of the Journal; if I present a suggestion or view that is different from or even disagrees with your policy, I would like you to accept it as my personal interest in your work.

In the Winter issue [p. 45], a caption has been quoted from John Hinnell's *Persian Mythology*. It reads: "Ardeshir II (379-383 AC) is shown receiving the crown from Ohrmazd ..." The entity interpreted as Ohrmazd is depicted as a man. I do not know the reason why this entity has been inferred to be Ohrmazd and not, for example, the High Mobed of the era.

Such interpretations by some western scholars with anthropomorphic religious views of their own, neglect the fact that in the religion of Zarathushtra, neither in the Gathas nor in the Younger Avesta as Hormazd Yasht, is God conceived in any physical form. I believe whenever in the future a controversial caption such as this one is quoted, it will be better if it carries a statement of clarification with it.

In the article "Ethics in Zoroastrianism" [p. 33] Dr. Ichaporia writes, quoting from Humbach-Ichaporia [*The Heritage of Zarathushtra*]: "Zarathushtra's religion is the dualis-

tic religion par excellence, i.e. a religion in which the evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways, as is necessary in monotheism, but in which God's antagonists are blamed for it."

Evidently this description is based on the qualities of God in Judaism in which good and evil both emanate from God. I would like to draw a word of caution here, because the definition of monotheism in different circles varies. For example, Webster's dictionary defines monotheism as "the doctrine or belief that there is but one God." In the Gathas based on Yasna 44 there is only one creator and sustainer of the universe as well as the moral and spiritual world, known as the Divine Dominion. No evil emanates from Ahura Mazda, who is only worthy of being worshiped. Light and darkness, sleep and wake are natural phenomena created by Ahura Mazda.

If good and evil both originate from God as in the Old Testament, one question remains unresolved, that is why God creates evil people to punish them by the fire of hell? As Dr. Ichaporia correctly notes: "...the question of why is it so must remain beyond human comprehension."

Zarathushtra, by considering evil as one aspect of the mind and reminding that even those who chose the wrong path did so with their own free will and knowledge of the final result [*Ys 30*], successfully and intelligently clears Ahura Mazda from any responsibility toward evil deeds committed by the wrongful in this world.

Dr. Ichaporia also writes "Ahura Mazda is described as being at the head of a group of divine beings called 'ahuras'. These ahuras evidently are the antagonists of the daevas ..." With all due respect for the author's studies and research, I would like to make a comment on this important issue. The word ahuras (separate from Mazda) is mentioned only in Yasna 30.9 and 31.4, but in neither one are the daevas cited. Then the question arises about where are they acting as antagonists of the daevas?

In the interpretation of the Gathas, one should not be influenced by the Vedas or other scriptures such as the

Vendidad and Younger Avesta, because the answers to the questions of the Gathas are in the questions themselves, e.g. in Yasna 31.15:

"How does a munificent person who strives for promoting the power of house, district or land with righteousness become like God?"

The answer is by promoting the power of house, district or land one becomes like God.

In Yasna 44.4:

"Who holds the earth below, who keeps the sky from breaking away? Who creates waters and plants ..."

The answer is in Yasna 44.7:

"... I recognize You God as the creator of all ..."

The Gathas are a monologue between Zarathushtra and Ahura Mazda and it is peculiar to the Gathas that often the teachings are communicated to the audience in the form of questions. Why? I believe it has to do with the prophets' faith in human wisdom and dignity. He does not come forward with commands and taboos; rather he recommends:

"Hear the best with your ears and ponder with a bright mind."

In simple terms – do not follow even the prophet blindly.

Daryoush Jahanian, MD
Kansas City, Kansas

The missing magazine

For days, my husband and I had been waiting patiently for the Spring issue. As days passed and it did not arrive, our postman Dave, got increasingly frustrated by my daily badgering. "See." I told him eagerly one day, as I showed him a past issue, "this is what it looks like." Thereafter Dave would walk through the door of our office, dump the mail on the nearest desk, and dart out at full speed with a loud "No FEZANA! Sorry," before I could banter him about my missing magazine.

Finally, yesterday was the day! Dave walked triumphantly into the office, waving the magazine in his hands: "It has arrived! Come and get it, all you FEZANA lovers!"

Kirill, our technician, a Canadian born in Estonia, could not hold back his curiosity. "Maybe" he said, as he

strained his neck to read over my shoulder, "after you've finished I can read it to find out what it is that inspires you thus!"

The articles on Yazidi Kurds, Tajiks (Kirill had lived in Tashkent for some time) and Russians were of interest to him. Now, during our lunch breaks, I read aloud articles from FEZANA. Kirill now makes periodic visits to the library to look up our religion, beliefs and practices. He had never met a Zarathushti or even heard of them, till he started working for us. Now he knows all about us.

It was a comment by my husband that finally induced me to write to you. "Instead of driving us crazy," he said, have you written and told FEZANA how anxiously you anticipate the arrival of their magazine? And how eagerly you enjoy devouring its contents?"

I have enthusiastically collected all your past issues to take with me to England on my next trip, so I can interest my cousin into subscribing to what I firmly believe is one of the *best* magazines I have ever read.

Thank you FEZANA for bringing happiness into the lives of so many!

Pervin Paterasp Nirumvala
Vancouver, British Columbia

Color of Fravahar

For some reason, people have been coloring Fravahar whatever color they like. I have seen it in brown, gold, green, red, white and blue and all the colors in between. We are creative indeed! However, the original colors are different. If you bother to use this symbol, then use it in its original colors. FEZANA, Payk-e-Mehr and other important Zarathushti publications need to use the right colors and promote an accurate image. I would be happy to send you a copy (call me at 253-529-8702 and send a stamped, self-addressed envelope) so you can see this glorious image as it was seen in Takht-e Jamshid in ancient Iran.

Khodadad Kaviani
Federal Way, Washington

Protesting misportrayals

The front page story in *India Post* [April 2, 1999] is about busloads of Hindus from the World Vaishnava Association and American Hindus Against Defamation participating in public protests against Universal Studios, producers of the TV series *Xena, the Warrior Princess*, which has portrayed Hindu deities as fictional. Hundreds of other Hindu organizations are supporting their action.

In view of our sad experiences of a similar nature, I think FEZANA should get in touch with these organizations and coordinate a joint series of actions, exhorting other religious leaders to join us in protesting and even contacting our congressmen and senators.

Maneck Bhujwala
San Jose, California

In regard to the TV series Hercules, FEZANA Public Relations chair, Sarosh Sukhia wrote to the producers (Renaissance Pictures, 100 Universal City Plaza, Bldg. 78, Universal City, CA 91608). Others are urged to do the same:

"On Sunday, January 24, 1999, an episode of the TV series Hercules was aired which depicted a character referred to as 'Zoroaster' ... It was offensive to see our Holy Prophet's name taken in such an inappropriate manner, and seeing him portrayed so much below his true stature as the founder of a major religion ... the intermingling of the demon Zohak with Zoroaster and the legendary Hercules is inaccurate ... distasteful and insulting to our community ... it depicts the founder of our religion as a mythical entity to be categorized with sorcerers, magicians, adventurers and ogres.

Perhaps if your script writer had done some research, it would have become apparent that the Zoroastrian religion is one of the oldest revealed faiths ... with 3,000 years of continuous history, which has influenced the evolution of religious thought significantly ...

"We would appreciate if you would see fit to immediately withdraw this

episode from distribution in North America and other countries. We would also request you not to promote the sale of videos of this insensitive episode ..."

No room in heaven

Here is a letter I wrote, which was published in a Colorado newspaper, Pueblo West View of January 28:

"It is good to see that the Christian Church has received a shot in the arm with the arrival of the Rev. R. Gordon Stone and his wife Julie. What impressed me was Rev. Stone's broader vision, as evidenced by his remark: 'Really, when you get to heaven, there's not going to be a Methodist section, a Baptist section; there will just be those who believe in Jesus.'

"I wonder whether that means that there will be no room in heaven for the admirable people of other faiths such as the Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Zarathushtis who lived a disciplined life, were helpful to their neighbors, and were charitable even to those Christian neighbors who did not share their faith ...

"Has Rev. Stone heard about the Parliament of World's Religions which had its start in Chicago in 1893 ... ?

It was a step forward when Rev. Stone moved from being a denominational minister to the interdenominational realm. May I suggest that he take another leap forward to the interfaith aspect of Religion (with a capital R).

Jamshed Udvardia
Lansing, Michigan

Tajikistan today

Subsequent to my article "*The Tajik Case for a Zoroastrian Identity*" [FEZANA Journal, Spring 1999] covering Tajiks in the early 1990s, conditions have changed considerably. My last trip to Tajikistan was for NoRuz 1997. The state of Tajikistan had declined piteously and the people's vibrant interest in their roots was paled into insignificance by the

desperate search for money to secure food. The Pamiri people's interest was overshadowed by the presence of the Agha Khan's Aid program which almost single handedly sustains their survival up in the remote mountain areas. Thus the sense of gratitude and loyalty is directed towards Agha Khan style Ismailis.

My presence in Tajikistan nevertheless warranted the TV news headlines wherein I was interviewed and asked to express my views about the state of the republic – a delicate task! The overwhelming hospitality of everybody contrasted with my impotence to help in a really significant way. My modest handouts on behalf of the Tajikistan Charitable Trust to orphanages, poets, and tree planting programs made me feel so depressed, while the people's expectations of me were so high (as if I had a magic wand and could make everything better) that I resolved not to return until my contribution could be of greater significance or until the country had found a degree of self-reliance.

The intellectuals nevertheless continue even in such difficult circumstances to write and discuss articles concerning the pre-Islamic past and the continuing cultural traces to be found in Tajikistan today. They celebrated NoRuz with a communal meal and speeches about the relevance of the ancient celebration of Spring. They are desperately trying to found a library and study center devoted to the Zoroastrian past and have scholars of Avestan amongst their number. In October 1998, a number of Tajik enthusiasts were sponsored to attend a meeting of Admirers of Ancient Iran, in Hamburg and presented papers which are being compiled for publication. (The previous year's contributions are available in two volumes in Farsi/Tajik-Cyrillic).

Shahin Bekhradnia
Oxon, United Kingdom

[Persons interested in helping the Tajik cause, contact Shahin at The Old Mill, Lidstone, Nr. Enstone, Oxon OX7 4HL, UK, tel: 0608-677537]

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- The Alliance to Save Energy is seeking a Program Manager to develop joint programs with Department of Energy; Washington, DC area. Contact JKumana@aol.com.

Business Opportunities in South Africa

Those interested in business opportunities in South Africa, may please contact Soli Shapurjee, Box 10352, Lenasia Extension 8, Johannesburg 1820, South Africa, tel: 852-4436.

Jewelry merchant looking for business opportunity

"I am a small time diamond and semi-precious stone merchant, operating out of my home in Pune, India," writes Farah Unwala, who is looking for a jeweler or businessman to support her enterprise. "I am honest and a persistent hard worker. I don't want a loan and I don't want charity. All I need is support and backing from someone who will not mind putting in a little bit of time, effort and resources. Contact Unwala at 020-68-2786.

Free Service
Network with Zarathushti professionals and businesses on the Internet at
www.zbnet.com

PLEASE GIVE
FROM
YOUR HEART

Donation checks, payable to "FEZANA", may be sent to the address in the appeal, or to Dinshaw Joshi, FEZANA Appeals Coordinator, 4515 Willard Avenue, #1609-S Chevy Chase, MD 20815, Tel: (301) 654-6250. For tax exemption eligibility please refer to FEZANA Journal [Winter 1994, p.60-61].

Lonavala Agiary

The 110-year-old Adenwalla Agiary in Lonavala, which also houses the fire from the Aden agiary, needs funds for extensive repairs and development of the Property Trust. "This is an appeal in the name of the Holy Fire" says Managing Trustee Cowasjee Dinshaw. Please send donation to FEZANA [see above].

ALTAVISIONS announces:

www.zarathusht.com

The idea is to help Zarathushtis to use the web to its full potential. This is a cost-effective solution for Zarathushti businesses and individuals no matter how big or small they are, to get a website.

Altavisions specializes in Internet Software, Website Design and Construction, using the latest tools and technology to your business use. Established in Massachusetts since 1996, we specialize in putting small businesses on the internet.

AltaVisions is offering websites and web pages for all Zarathushti-related material on a special domain and server, setup for this purpose at:

<http://www.zarathusht.com>

For more information contact:

Rita J. Kapadia, President, ALTAVISIONS
Tel: (978) 369-5810
Email: info@altavisions.com

Thinking of moving to or investing in HOUSTON?

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Enjoy the moderate climate and take advantage of the rapid growth of the Houston area.

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Email: RonAga@netscape.net

Fax: (281) 568-6175



Panchgani Dar-e-Meher

In an effort to build a substantial corpus for maintenance of the beautiful 65-year-old dar-e-meher in Panchgani, trustees have developed a win-win scheme. For a donation of Rs. 5000 (\$125), a 'machi' will be offered and 'afringan' prayers performed on a day to be selected by the donor, for 5 years. 'Tandarosti' will also be recited daily with the names of your choice. Please send donation checks to FEZANA [see above].

Parsee General Hospital

Jamshed and Yasmin Ghadiali are once again spearheading the annual fund-raising drive for B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Mumbai. They write: "... donations will be used specifically for distributing free medicine for the poor and needy Zarathushtis at the hospital. Every cent collected is sent to the hospital. Last year we collected and sent \$17,154 ... Through the efforts of Zenobia Lala, we received medical equipment from Healthcare in Michigan. We took three shipments of disposable kits for patient care and 15 walkers." Please make checks to ZAGNY Critical Assistance Fund, and mail to the Ghadiali's at 2686 Belcher Street, Baldwin, NY 11510.

Special Olympics

Gool Plumber, area director of the Andhra Pradesh Special Olympics Committee is trying to raise funds to send 5 athletes and 3 coaches to the annual World Special Olympic

Games in North Carolina in Summer 1999. Any small donation will help a child fulfill a dream. Please make the check to Jahangir Nakra, 381 Farwood Drive, Ward Hill, MA 01835.

Doongerwadi Update

Following intensive fund-raising efforts last year, trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet have effected major improvements at Doongerwadi [see FEZANA Journal, Winter 1998, p. 81] including extensive renovation of bunglis, pavilion, nasakhana and restrooms; 600 trees and a garden of flowers have been planted where the bodies are laid for final respects before they are taken to the dokhmas; figures of Assyrian bulls are being sculpted for the entrance to the 'sagdi'; and two new hearses are being acquired. Continued support is needed to maintain this legacy for future generations. Send donations to FEZANA [see address above].

Nanpura, Surat Agiary

Mr. Dotiwala, Managing Trustee of the Bisney Agiary in Nanpura, Surat has made an appeal for funds needed to repair the agiary. Send donations to FEZANA [see address above].

DPYA needs computers

The Dadar Parsi Youth Assembly High School is in need of computers (they do not have a single one) as well as upgrades to the library and science lab. All students of the Dadar Athornan Madressa study at the DPYA totally free of charge. Computers (new please) or donations towards their purchase will be gratefully accepted. Please send donations to FEZANA [see address above]. For information contact Pervin Mistry at (905) 828-2125.

Appeal for Kidney Transplant

Sorab Ghandi of Dadar Parsi Colony, Mumbai has appealed for financial assistance to meet his medical costs for a kidney transplant, expected to be Rs. 4 - 6 lakhs. 62 year old Mr. Gandhi is retired and does not have any medical insurance.

Since December, he has undergone three operations at a cost (for hospitalization, surgeon and medicines) of Rs. 60,000. He is currently on dialysis three times a week at a cost of Rs. 20,000 per month. Please send donations to FEZANA [see address above].

Help needed by Zarathushti in Australia

A Zarathushti in Australia is going through a very difficult time in life financially and healthwise, suffering from chronic fatigue, an incurable scoliosis problem and temporo mandibular disfunction. Without a job for the past 5 years he is appealing to large-hearted Zarathushtis to help him pay for his heavy medical expenses and debts. Send donations to FEZANA [see address above].

Dadgah in Salsette

A new Parsi colony, possibly the biggest to date, is being built by Persepolis Construction at Andheri East, in Mumbai. Tenants are collecting funds for building and maintaining a Dadgah in the colony and to support full-time priests. They are appealing to the Zarathushti community at large for a "helping hand by donating for this noble cause." Please send donations to FEZANA [see address above].

Imported Australian Kraft Cheese

\$72 per case of 36 tins

Call Mrs. Perviz C. Patel at (626) 967-0037

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Acknowledgments

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received this quarter through March 1999.

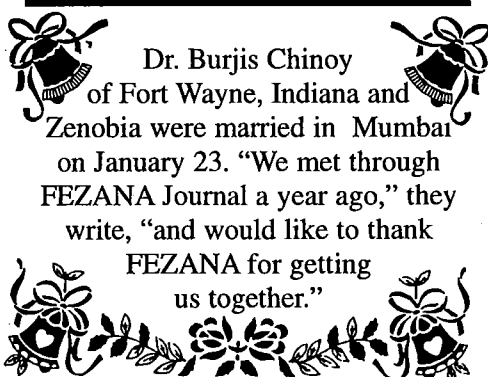
"Basic Text": FEZANA has received overwhelming support for *The Zarathushti Religion: a Basic Text* with donations totaling over \$4,200 "to help publish and distribute additional religious materials." Overall cost was \$10,500, shared by FEZANA (\$4200), CIMNA (\$3750), NAMC (Cdn\$3000) and an anonymous donor (Cdn\$1000). Additional copies are available from Farrokh Mistree, 3846 Greenbrook Way, Atlanta, GA 30345. Please send donations to FEZANA Treasurer.

Scholarship Endowment: Jerry M. Kheradi, M.D. \$20,000 to the FEZANA Scholarship Endowment Fund in the name of his father, Mr. Merwan Dorab Kheradi.

For Welfare Fund: Cyrus Austin, AZ (\$51); Dick Vazir, FL (\$51).

For Various Appeals: Noshir Dhalla, FL (\$40); Behram & Farieda Irani, TX (\$100+\$50+100); Pervin Kadwa, CA (\$100); Erach & Lily Karanjawala, CA (\$25); Rohinton Ogra, IL (\$45+\$45).

For FEZANA Journal: Anonymous, IL (\$349); Tehemtan Arjani, CA (\$41); Pervin Bhatena, ONT (\$30); Rustom Bhatena, OH (\$10); Gev Daji, New Zealand (\$11); Behroze Daruwalla, TX (\$21); Zubin & Jasmine Dastoor, VA (\$20); Mehrdad Dehmiri, IN (\$10); Homi Gilan, BC (\$10); Kekoo & Dilnavaz Irani, IL (\$15); Dr. Khosrow Jamshidi, CA (\$20); Firoz Ghandhi, MI (\$20); Hoshang Pestonji, NC (\$15); Noel Mancherje, NY (\$10); Mehli & Tehmina Mehta, CA (\$20); Zal K. Parakh, TX (\$20); Dick Vazir, FL (\$51). ■



■ ■ ■ ■ MATRIMONIALS ■ ■ ■ ■

FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. FEZANA does not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna.

Male, 28, well-built, 6', US citizen, Indian TV/film shooting consultant. Interested in slim, tall, home-loving girl. Call (732) 549-3772. [M98-19]

Male, B. Com, 29, fair, good looking, well settled in the US in a unique and challenging profession. Interests include travel, music, nature and romance. Would like to meet caring, loving, understanding woman. Call (609) 242-9033. [M99-7]

Female, 30, accountant in Australia, likes outdoors, sports, theater and operas. Willing to relocate. Call uncle at (609) 890-6757. [F99-9]

Handsome, male physician, 35, divorced, caring nature. Contact sister at (813) 839-8399. [F99-10]

Male, 27, US citizen, good natured, very caring, loves traveling, strong family values, seeks lady with good upbringing. Call (602) 786-3960 or email: a.irani@law.cwsi.edu. [M99-11]

Outgoing, well-settled female, 34, BA, computers, in Travel & Tourism. Cyclist, loves traveling, outdoors. Call (602) 786-3960. [F99-12]

Good-looking female, 25, 5' 2", outgoing, B. Tech in Hotel Management, working in large Mumbai hotel, Call cousin Arnavaz at (414) 821-1738. [F99-13]

Female, 34, medium build, 5' 3", MA (English Lit.). gives tuitions, experience with banking. Visiting USA in until July. Call (212) 956-7320 or Mumbai 386-6234. [F99-14]

Female, 36, MA (English Literature) in publishing-advertising and journalism in India. Enjoys music, theater, writing children's stories. Call brother at (219) 485-8361. [F99-15]

28 year old woman, sincere, loving, moderately religious, software consultant, working in SF Bay area. Seeking matrimonial alliance, must be non-smoker. Parties from India welcome. [F99-16]

Female, 29, 5' 2", BA, computer diploma, working in cellular phone company in Ahmedabad. Visiting US in September. Call uncle at (732) 549-3772. [F99-17]

Male, 31, 5' 9", IIT graduate, Ph.D. from Ivy League institution; working with multinational in US, seeks alliance with well-educated, cultured, caring, kind, professional girl below 29, with good family values. Call (414) 369-1452. [M99-18]

Parents invite correspondence for good-looking, **highly educated, very charming, daughter, 35, 5' 4",** software consultant in UK. Boy should be from respectable family, educated, with prosperous future. Call Mumbai +91-22-309-8002. [F99-19]

Female, 33, MBA, own jewelry business in Mumbai. Contact parents in Pune at 212-462-778 or brother at eric1704@aol.com. [F99-21]

Female 26, in hotel management, schooling in Gulf/Switzerland. Enjoys traveling and scuba-diving. Call (905) 238-2732. [F99-22]

Good-looking, fair, female 25, slim, 5' 4", studied in UAE/UK, working in marketing, sociable, enjoys traveling. Parents invite correspondence. Call (416) 694-2947, email: emerald_nf@hotmail.com. [F99-23]

Male, 26, fair, slim, well-settled, working for multinational bank in Karachi as a Computer Network engineer. Kind-hearted and outgoing personality. Willing to settle in US or Canada. Please email biodata to friend at aelavia@qis.net. [M99-24]

Parsi lady, 29, US citizen, petite, fair, highly qualified, from upper middle-class family. Interests include sports and music. [F99-25]

Female, 5' 7", B.A., in Mumbai travel agency, secretarial and airline experience. Excellent cook (takes party orders). Call (732) 940-8469 or Mumbai 642-2297. [F99-26] ■

MILESTONES

Please submit announcements to Mahrukh Motafram [see back cover].

Births

Negeen Aidun, a girl, to Gita and Rashid Aidun, in Montreal, Quebec, on November 6.

Tanya Behramsha, a girl, to Roshan and Percy Behramsha of Houston. Kubyar is a very happy and proud brother.

Tishtrya, a girl, to Farzeen and Xerxes Cama of Chicago, on April 24. Brother Stivant is delighted.

Kai Darius, a boy, to Tinaz Chinoy and Glen Washer, in Montreal, Quebec, on October 6.

Ruzan Hushedar Daruwalla, a boy, to Hushedar and Bakhtavar Daruwalla, in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 1.

Zubin Driver, a boy, to Preeti and Neville Driver, of Boston area, on November 26.

Justin Kianipour, a boy, to Gurpreet and Farokh Kianipour, grandson to Irandokht and Keki Kianipour and nephew to Farida Houshmand Shar-yari, of Chicago, on January 10.

Reanna Khushroo Unwalla, a girl, to Dr. Khushroo and Farah Unwalla of Highland, CA, granddaughter to Behram Unwalla of Mumbai, India, granddaughter to Nergish and Fali Lakdawala on January 29.

Navjote, Sedreh Pushi

Parmis and Parmida Behmardi, daughters of Iradj and Fereshteh Behmardi, on January 16, in Burnaby, BC.

Gohar and Bahram Firozgari, children of Mahnaz and Farrokh Firozgari, on February 13, in Houston.

Xerxes and Ninalee Irani, on August 15.

Bezan and Kayras Irani, sons of Darayush and Nilufer Irani, on September 26, 1998, in Vancouver.

Parisa, Anahita and Neelufer Khosraviani, daughters of Farangis and Mehraban Khosraviani of St. Louis, MO, on February 27. Sedreh Pushi was performed by Mobed Keikhosrow Mobed, in Westmont, IL.

Weddings

Tanaz Colabawala of Houston and **Chesley Choudhury** were married in Mumbai, on February 6.

Cyrus Minwalla, son of Shiraz and Hoshedar Minwalla of Silver Springs, Maryland, to **Anaheeta Patel**, daughter of Aban and Savak Patel, in Houston.

Zubin Irani to **Pheroza Jamaji** from Montreal, Quebec, in Mumbai, India, on December 25.

Rustom Jamaji from Montreal, Quebec to **Sherna Wadia**, in Mumbai, India, on December 10.

Deaths

Homi Austin, father of Neelum Austin of Calgary, Alberta, in London on December 23. Masiso (first month) humbandagi prayers were held at Neelum's house.

Bacha Avari, 75, mother of Maharoukh Deshmukh of Delta, BC, Roshan Mirza of Pune, India, Thrity Prabhu of Maryland and Firdosh Avari of Indore, India, in Navsari, India, in November.

Hootan Dehnad, 41, son of Jahan-shah and Mahvash Dehnad, April 13.

Hillamai Faredoon Dinshaw, mother of Keki, Minoo, Perin, Dinyar, Pesi and Rusi, grandmother to Arvind Dinshaw, Freddy and Zarine Unwalla, Freddy Dinshaw, Porus Dinshaw, Rukshan Bulsara, Marook Sidhwa, Sankya Poonawalla and Leila Fram-roze and great-grandmother of 15, in Pune, India, on December 23, ten days after her 100th birthday [from ZSO newsletter].

Iraj Fallahzadeh, 55, father of Koroush, Hormuz and Zubin, brother of Jongir, in Vancouver, BC, on November 27.

Bahram Goshtasbpour, husband of Homayoun, father of Farangis and Shahram, brother of Bahman, in Toronto, on February 19. Dr. Gosh-tasbpour was an active member of the Religious, Education and other committees of ZSO.

Shirin Godrej Kandawalla (née Minwalla) 93, wife of late Godrej, mother of Dhunmai (Phiroze) Dalal of Los Angeles, and Franey and Behroze of Karachi, in Karachi, on February 24.

Banoo Savak Khambatta, 84, mother of Gool Shahrokh Mehta of Syracuse, Minoo Khambatta of Karachi and Vera Kaikobad of Rawalpindi. Grandmother of Parastu Jamshed Dubash of Shrewsbury, MA and Kershaw Mehta of Poughkeepsie.

Nariman Jokhy, 82, husband of Rati, father of Aban and Pervez of Peoria, uncle of Sheraz Bhesania of Vancouver, in Peoria, IL, on March 4 [see page 98].

Esfandiar Khodadad Khosraviani, 85, father of Kiyan Pashootanizadeh of Houston, in Iran, on January 2.

Behram Ardeshir Meherhomji, father of Cyrus Meherhomji of Texas and Roshan Bulsara, in Mumbai, on March 26.

Daulat Mehta, mother of Khurshid (Farokh) Tarapore, of Baldwin, NY, grandmother of Semoneel, Freya and Cyrus, on February 17.

Bhikhaji Mulla, in Hounslow, UK on March 25. Mr. Mulla worked in the merchant navy and in dockyards in Aberdeen, Scotland. He and his wife lived in Texas for a while until her death 16 years ago. Since then he lived in UK and often visited relatives (Variavas of Jer Baug and Cushrow Baug) in Mumbai. [From Adil Agga].

Noshir (Billy) Patel, 77, in South-hall, Middlesex, UK, at the hands of an intruder in his flat, in March. Mr. Patel was a retired, Air India employee [From Adil Agga].

Hillamai Pestonji Pochkhana-walla, 93, maternal grandmother of Jimmy (Mahzabeen) Eduljee and Arnavaz (Darayus) Elavia of Chicago, Adil (Faezeh) Eduljee of Dallas, and mother of Sheroo (Eady) Eduljee of Mumbai, in Mumbai on January 10. *[In the last issue of FEZANA Journal, Hillamai was listed as "mother" instead of "grandmother". The Journal deeply regrets this inadvertent error].*

Arvin Rao, 16-year-old son of Mani and Murli Rao of Chicago (formerly of Pittsburgh), brother of Anita, nephew of Firoze (Pravina) Gandhi of Whittier, CA, Homi (Villy) Gandhi of Glen Rock, NJ and Rusi Gandhi of Montville, NJ, on April 12, in an accident at a train railroad crossing.

The family writes: "Our most heartfelt and sincere gratitude goes to Ervads Dr. Kersey Antia, Jamshed Ravji, Arda-e-Viraf Minocherhomjee, Hoshi Vazifdar and Neville Vazifdar for the funeral ceremonies and very special prayers rendered with such fervent sincerity for the eternal peace of our dearest son Arvin's noble soul who so suddenly left us all".

Rostam Vakhsoori, father of Koorosh, Darioush and Artabanoo, in Iran in March. Porseh ceremony to honor Dr. Vakhsoori, was held at the Dar-e-Mehr in San Jose, on March 13.

*The way of heaven
does not compete,
And yet it skilfully
Achieves victory.*

*It does not speak,
And yet it skilfully
Responds to things.*

*The way of heaven
Comes to you
Without an invitation.*

- Lao-Tzu (600 BC)

Shah Jamshid Soroushian A silent server goes silent

Shah Jamshid Soroushian, whom I knew as a close friend for the last 40 years, was a man who silently and sincerely served the Zarathushtrian cause.

Born in Kerman, he loved his birthplace so much that he lived almost his entire life there. He was an industrious agriculturist who modernized and developed his lands.

Shah Jamshid was a scholar who passed his spare time in research on the Good Religion and history, particularly of his Kerman. His *Farhang-e Behdinan*, a treatise on the Dari' dialect spoken by Zoroastrians and their neighbors in Yazd and Kerman, has had many editions.

His *Tarikh-e Zartoshtian-e Kerman* speaks of the fine features of the Zartoshtis of Kerman. *Be Yad-e Pir-e Moghan* contains various essays on the Good Religion. And his *Savud-amuzi va Dabiri dar Din-e Zartosht* shows the importance of education and scholarship in the Good Religion.

- Ali A Jafarey

I was saddened to read the obituary of a man whom I remember so fondly. He was not only a scholar, agriculturist and humanitarian, but also a wonderful man who freely shared his home, his food and his knowledge of history and Dari. I spent many happy hours with him, listening and learning from him. Knowing that his hospitality lay ahead of me made the journey between Yazd and Kerman an easy one, even in the worst of weather. I will always remember his kindness and the way he brought old Kerman to life for me. It was an honor to know him; may his soul be blessed.

- Michael Simmons

Shah Jamshid Soroushian passed away in Iran. A memorial porseh ceremony was held on March 13 at the Zoroastrian Center in Westminster, CA. Shah Jamshid is survived by his wife Homayun and four children: Mahvash (Mrs. Goudarz), Anahita (Mrs. Syoushansi), Armaity (Mrs. Shahriari), Dr. Soroush Soroushian and Dr. Mehrborzin Soroushian. ■

[Also see book review of Shah Jamshid's book, by Jamshid Varza on page 81]

Minoo Eruchshaw Treasurywala, 1918 -1999 A guiding light for the community

Minoo Treasurywala was a guiding light to the Zarathushti community in Ontario, ever since his immigration to Toronto with his family in 1965. As an active member of the early *Zoroastrian Fraternity* he helped new arrivals to get settled in Canada, and over the years counseled many Zarathushti (and non-Zarathushti) families facing problems.

His leadership and vision were recognized by his election in 1972 as founder President of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario. A believer in the importance of religious knowledge, he pioneered religious classes for youth and adults in the Toronto area.



Minoo's dedication and service to the community has been appreciated with many noteworthy awards including: a plaque from ZSO in



The sudden and untimely passing of Rohinton P. Chinoy, (right) 50, manager of Union Press in Mumbai, on March 5, is a deep loss to the community. An institution that could well be regarded as a national heritage, Union Press, has filled the needs of the Parsi community, by printing Zarathushti prayer books, calendars, magazines and books on Zarathushti religion and history. Founded in 1857, the management of the press has remained in the family for five generations always committed to the highest traditional values and work ethic. Well-respected for his multifarious activities for the welfare of the Zarathushti community, Mr. Chinoy, who was also Jr. Hon. Secy of WZO (India), is survived by his mother Perinbanu, wife Dinaz and daughters Meher and Kainaz.

1991, "In appreciation of invaluable services rendered to the Zoroastrian Community of Ontario." FEZANA presented him with the "Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Award" for "dedicating his life to the cause of perpetuating the religion of Zarathushtra in North America."

It was also recognized that his devotion to humanity spans far beyond his work within the community. In 1992, he was awarded the "Confederation of Canada 125th Anniversary Medal." The citation reads:

"For his clear thinking and compassion and contribution in Canada after leaving a successful career in business and public affairs in India.

For giving comfort to the chronically ill;

For help to misguided youth;

For assistance to those less fortunate than himself ..."

Born in Mumbai, Minoo graduated from Bombay University in 1940 and held various executive positions in industry and commerce in India. His last position was as President of Ind-

export Limited, a subsidiary of Hindustan Lever, which, under Minoo's stewardship, won national awards for outstanding export performance.

He also served on a number of public bodies including: the Indian Railway Advisory Committee, Indian Council of Foreign Trade, Chemical Products Export Promotion Council, Indian Road Development Council and an observer at UN session on Trade in Bangkok.

After immigrating to Canada with his family in 1965, Minoo joined the Hydroelectric Commission of Cooksville (now Hydro Mississauga) where his astute management skills and foresight were recognized by his appointment as Treasurer and Secretary, until his retirement in 1982.

Minoo passed away on February 18. He is survived by his wife Coomi, daughter Anaita and her husband Helmut, son Adi and his wife Mary-Rose, granddaughter Katy and sister Jeru. [From ZSO].

"Away from home thanks to people like Arda and Jamshed our lives are enriched"

On March 4, Mah Meher and Roz Meher, my 82-year-old "Nari mama" Nariman Jokhy of Mumbai, passed away due to complications following back surgery, in Peoria, Illinois where his two children, Aban and Pervez are settled with their families.

Of course, we were devastated, but my immediate concern was how will the two children, who had never experienced such a loss and without having much connection with Parsis, handle all the arrangements. Nari mama's wish was to be cremated and have the ashes taken to Mumbai.

I was told that Chicago has a very efficient infrastructure of mobeds who do travel and perform ceremonies. Aban made some phone calls, and within 24 hours, was able to get in touch with my cousin in Chicago, Ardaviraf Minocherhomji who made arrangements for Ervad Jamshed Ravji to come over to perform the paidasht ceremony. That, at a time when Chicago was having all kinds of snow storms was really terrific. While his daughter Khursheed in Mumbai had all the prayers done there, at this end everything went off

Complimentary Subscriptions to FEZANA JOURNAL

FEZANA JOURNAL will be happy to donate one year's subscription to each North American Zarathushti who has his/her navjote/sudreh-pushhi performed and to each couple announcing their wedding in the Journal. This is an effort to introduce young initiates and couples to the Journal and to FEZANA and hopefully develop a life-long bond. Your donations to "The Journal Subscription Fund" to help support this initiative will be deeply appreciated.

To redeem this offer or to make a donation, please contact FEZANA treasurer Rustom Kevala at (301) 765-0792, email: rustom@aol.com.

beautifully. I was finally at peace knowing, at least, that my mama, a very religious man, got a beautiful funeral ceremony, with all the proper prayers that he so loved.

I sincerely want everyone in North America and India to read this and be thankful for our blessings in this land of plenty. Away from home, thanks to people like Ardaviraf and Jamshed, our many mobeds and community members, our lives are made much happier, easier and enriched. ■

- By Shiraz Bhesania, Vancouver, BC

EVENTS AND HONORS

Ten year old **TAILA ANANDASAGAR**, daughter of Armaity and Anandasagar of Toronto, participated in the ballet, tap, jazz and theater categories at a regional dance competition organized by the Dance Educators of America in Buffalo, New York. She took to the podium three times for the Gold medal and twice for a Silver medal placing. Taila will compete at the national Competition in Las Vegas, in July.



Tenth grade honor student **NAZNEEN BAHRASSA** [above] daughter of Feraydoon and Persis of Shreveport, LA, was selected for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership award, based on an essay, leadership potential, incentive to achieve and extra-curricular activities. She also has an opportunity to be selected for the World Leadership Congress in Philadelphia in July 1999.

DOLLY DASTOOR (FEZANA past president) received her Ph.D. degree in Psychology from Concordia University (Montreal) in November. This March, son **FARAHAD DASTOOR** obtained his Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of British Columbia. With husband **PHIROZ DASTOOR** (past president of ZSO), who obtained his, in Chemical Engineering in 1972, that makes three doctorates in the family!

FILLY MARAVALA has been elected the first Asian Mayor of Redbridge and with that becomes the first Zarathushti Mayor of London, Borough of Redbridge. This is a historic achievement and a proud moment for all Zarathushtis. A staunch Zarathushti, and a pillar of the community in UK, Filly has served on the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) for fourteen years. Mr. Maravala is the brother of Mrs Purviz Kuroosh Mistry of Ontario as well as Yezdi, Coomi and Neville in the UK.

RATAN TATA, head of the \$8.45 billion Tata Group, has been inducted into the Global Corporate Governance Advisory Board. The 60-year old chairman will join worldwide corporate giants from Cadbury Schweppes, General Motors, Campbell Soup, Sara Lee, Daimler Benz, Phillips and others, to codify internationally acceptable global standards on corporate governance.

After hearing **JAMSHED UDVA-DIA** of Lansing, MI, tell stories at the Annual Tellabration in Lansing in 1997 and 1998, he was invited to lead a workshop on "Building Stage Presence" at the Toad Hollow School of Story-telling in Fulton, MI. Udvardia is currently busy directing a one-act play by Anton Chekhov, as part of an 8-week workshop for aspiring 'young' directors.

ASPI RUSTOM WADIA, Ph.D., a of Loveland, Ohio, and staff engineer at General Electric Aircraft Engines, Cincinnati, has been named a Fellow of the American Society of Mechan-

ical Engineers International, for his significant contributions to the field. The 125,000-member ASME International is a worldwide engineering society focused on technical, educational and research issues.

CAINAZ VAKHARIA, daughter of Arnavaz and Adi Vakharia of New Orleans, LA, a Military Intelligence Officer currently stationed in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, was promoted to captain in the US Army on November 28. She recently returned to the US after a 3-year tour in Germany. ■



We Goofed!

FEZANA Journal regrets the announcement [on page 19 of the Spring 1999 issue] about Dr. Mahyar Ardeshir and Dr. Farzad Ardeshiri's "interest in arranging tours of Iran.", giving the incorrect impression that they are tour organizers. As we all know, both gentlemen are highly respected professionals and leaders of the Zarathushti community. Dr. Mahyar Ardeshiri is a surgeon and a former professor at the University of Tehran; Dr. Farzad Ardeshiri is a scientist with the Atomic Energy of Canada. We apologize for publishing this announcement sent to the Journal by a reliable source, without additional checking. For information on tours to Iran, please call Dr. Phiroz Dastoor at (416) 242-7433

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FEZANA JOURNAL is published four times a year, for the purpose of disseminating news and views, as well as educational and inspirational articles about the Zarathushti religion, culture and practices as they pertain to Zarathushtis in North America. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA.

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