

SATTAR: Persia's legendary musical icon heads for Budapest

Sattar's fame began at the age of 22 with the release of the theme song *Khaneh Bedosh* for *Morad Barghi*, a popular television show in Persia. The show made him an instant star. Young, talented, and extremely handsome, he soon became an icon all over the Middle East. He is the favourite of the Persian Royal Family and is Persia's most idolised vocalist artist.

In 1978, Sattar migrated to the United States and continued his singing career in Los Angeles, California. In 1980, he got married and eventually became a father. His career blossomed further through the years, leading him on to tours all over the world.

He graduated in International Economics and in 2004 the International Further Studies Institute (IFSI) conferred him with an Honorary Doctorate.

Sattar is a Persian Academy Award winner in music, who is travelling to Budapest to attend and perform at the Academy Awards where he will be honoured in October 2005.

The IFSI recently interviewed this renowned artist:

Your fame goes back to early '70s at the time of The Shah's reign (Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, the last king of Persia) and today, you are still a true icon to more than 100 million people and a considerable number of Persians around the world. How do you view yourself and your art before and after the Islamic revolution? What connects you so well and so closely with Persians and your fans?

● Before the revolution Persia was at its peak and experienced rapid development of almost every dimension; naturally its arts and artists both had a very special and valuable place in and outside the country. Besides, due to our rich Persian history and culture our arts and artists were among the most renowned in the whole region and at international levels too. But after the Islamic revolution, the majority of our artists had to leave the country and follow their careers elsewhere - some even started from scratch.

In fact, everything was lost and unfortunately since then we are still under oppression. But regarding the second part of your question, I can simply say through honesty, genuineness and firmness.

Having released over 250 records and spent more than 35 years of active performance in over 22 countries, how do you feel about your job?

● Well, I am thrilled that I could be productive and could reflect my feelings and love through my art everywhere I visited and could serve our Persian communities around the world.

It is said that you are one of those very few renowned Persian artists in Los Angeles who often performs at charity and cultural events close to his heart for free. What motivates or drives you to be so generous and giving?

● I went to America because of an unwanted situation - I hope one day rule of law takes over again there and I can go back and serve my country. If

this does not happen in my lifetime you can be sure that I have brought up my child and grandchild in a way that they will do so. Till that time I will do my best to assist uphold our true Persian culture and music.

How would you define Persian music? Where does it stand now?

● I can define it as an endless universe. In Persian classic music we have over 900 *Gushehs*, which literally means corner, or angle but here a piece of music in over seven *Radifs* and their components. *Radif* literally means row, it is the repertory of Persian art music together with traditional order of classification with over five *Dastgah*. *Dastgah* is the most important structural element of *Radif*, and formed by combination of various *Gushehs* with their own melody-lines and varied rhythmic patterns. Usually a *Dastgah* consists of several *Gushehs*. So, you can imagine what with such an endless capacity Persian music can offer to the world.

Regarding the second part of your question, unfortunately after the Pahlavi regime our music and its personality came under question. Once the Pahlavi regime was overthrown, everything ended with it as well.

The Islamic Republic changed our traditional music, its arrangements and *Radifs*. Persian music was the most influential music in the region in the 1970s but when the Islamic Republic happened everything went into decline.

In your music, which has the more dominant role - lyrics or melody?

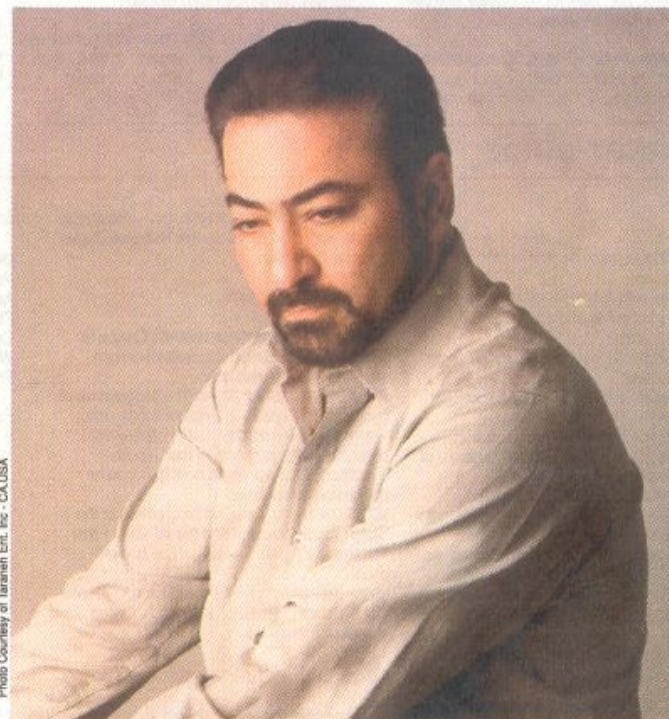


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● While our melodic history goes back 80 or 90 years, our poems have over 1000 years of history. Therefore, in my opinion poems and lyrics have dominating roles.

We have learnt that you are gifted by a voice, which enables you to sing variety of Persian music from classical to pop. How did you develop such a range? Have you had any formal vocal training or is it a natural talent?

● When I was a child I listened to radio music programme *Golha* every night. Apart from only a month's training in Mashhad (a city in Persia) I learnt *Radifs* by ear. Actually, the natural sense I have had since childhood

allowed me to expand.

You will be having a short performance in Hungary at the Persian Academy Awards' ceremony where there will be Hungarian and EU officials, artists, musicians and scholars participating. Are you excited about this performance and your first visit to Hungary?

● Hungary is country with rich tradition and historical values. It gives me great pleasure to be going there to meet its people and discover its culture.

More information on the IFSI and the upcoming Persian Academy Awards is available at the website www.ifsi.hu.