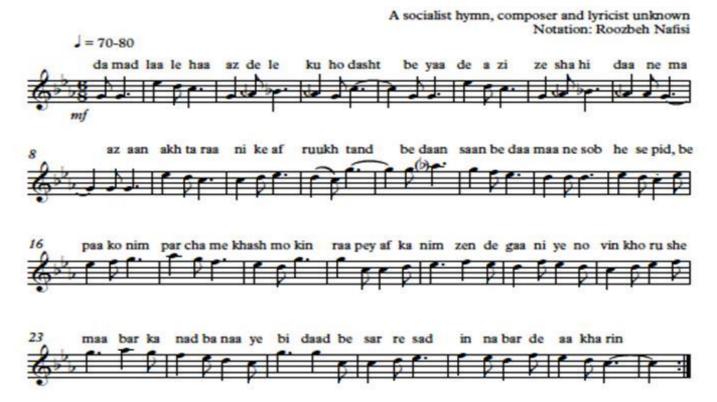
46th ICTM World Conference (Lisbon, Portugal) Presentation on July 26, 2022 at 12:30

# The Santur-Playing Iranian-Americans in Northern California

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### Tulips (Laalehaa)



A protest song (in Farsi) of the Iranian leftist oppositions

briefly before and after the 1979 revolution

as remembred by

an anonymous Iranian-American santur player in Northern California (Anonymous 2020)

# **Backgrounds and Motivations**

- Santur
- A chordophone from the family of hammered dulcimers
- Representative instrument of Iranian music
- Types: 9-bridge G-santur, and larger
- Iran
- Northern California
- Iranian Americans



Map of California (Tamanho 2018)

- Personal Motivations
- My experience as an Iranian-American santur musician in Northern California: before 2008 and after
- My PhD dissertation: ethnomusicology and musical acoustics

## **Research Questions**

- 1) What are the aesthetic conceptions of Iranian santurs and their sounds, held by santur-playing Iranian-Americans in Northern California?
- 2) What are the social applications of Iranian santurs in Northern California?

## Methods

- Participatory Field Research
- Expert Interview

#### Five questions:

- 1- Please provide a brief self-introduction, including how you got involved with santur.
- 2- In your region, which occasions might commonly include santur performances?
- 3- Please introduce your region's santur communities (emphasizing on performance, pedagogy and making of santur).
- 4- In your region, what are the ensemble settings in which the santur participates?
- 5- Please describe your region's typical santur repertories.
- Listening Test (opinions about audio samples)

Five short music samples, each one followed by five questions:

- 1- Please comment on the type and sound qualities of the santur.
- 2- What is the possible performance occasion?
- 3- What are the tuning details?
- 4- What are the particular performance qualities?
- 5- Please add any additional remark you might find important regarding this sample.
- Literary Research
- Reflections on my experience as a santur-playing Iranian-American who lived, played, and taught in Northern California

## Collaborating Persons

- Three persons collaborated with me on interviews and listening tests:
- Faraz Minooei (40): professional santur player and educator (San Jose)
- Saeid Bashash (38): santur player and professor of mechanical engineering (San Jodse)
- Anonymous (in his 60s): social activist and amateur santur player (Rancho Cordova)



Faraz Minooei and Colleagues on Stage - 2019, San Jose (Minooei 2019)

# **Findings**

#### I) Social aspects:

- Three groups: masters of older generations, masters of younger generations, pupils
- Characteristics of activities: role of the tradition
- Occasions of social presentations
- Intercultural exchanges
- Formation of new musical languages

## II) Performance approaches:

- Ornamentations
- Virtuosity
- The feeling
- The *moment*

#### III) Organological aspects:

- Instruments
- Tuning

## Conclusion

- Social applications based on political motivators and intercultural dialogues
- Santurs in Northern California meeting specific needs of musicians:
  - Mostly 9-bridge G-santurs
  - Also larger santurs, including 11-bridge and 12-bridge instruments
- Santur in Northern California: a distinctive identity



Collaboration of Iranian and Indian Santurs

A. Chattppadhyay, T. Bhattacharya, R. Nafisi - 2007, UC Berkeley
(Nafisi 2007)

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