



(LAS 7261)

FOLK MUSIC OF IRAN

The Luristan and Fars Provinces

LURISTAN:

Luristan is a region southeast of Tehran in the area of the Zargos mountains. Luristan means 'country of the Lurs' who are a group of semi-nomadic tribes. This is the same area as that of the famous Luristan bronzes of the 7th and 8th Centuries B.C.

The Fars province, south of Isfahan, is in southern Iran. It is the capitol of Shiraz, birthplace of the two famous Persian poets, Hafiz and Saadi. It is also the birthplace of the Persian language - Farsi - that means a dialect from Fars. Fars has been the site of several famous Persian capitols such as Cyrus' Persepolis, the capitol of Darius and Xerxes. The language borrowed many words from the east and northeast and the present vocabulary shows strong Arab influence. Today the language, with variations, is also spoken in Afghanistan and Russian Turkistan.

INSTRUMENTS:

Nay - a vertical flute made of bamboo whose origin can be traced back as far as 3000 B.C. It is an instrument, which is played all over the Middle East and North Africa. The Persian name nay is used in Egypt and Turkey as well. It has five or six finger holes. The flute is held in the mouth overlapping the front teeth, held in a slanting, downwards position, and blown across its upper sharp edge. The musical possibilities for variation in timbre are great with the nay since the player can vary the angle of blowing against the edge for more or less expression and vibrato.

Setar - a long necked lute. The word tar means string, and the setar has three strings and is plucked.

Zurna - double reed oboe, conical in shape and made of wood. It has seven holes on the front and one in the back. The reed is held inside the mouth and the bulging cheeks of the

player are used as bags of air as in human bagpipe. This instrument is also found throughout North Africa, Turkey, India, Java, etc.

Dombek - a drum with a wooden base, which is held under the left arm. It is covered with a skin and is played by both hands. The muffled sound made by hitting the instrument in the middle is called DUM and the sharper sound made by hitting the instrument at its rim is called TEK, thus DUMBEEK.

Daf - a tambourine, circular in shape with a single skin on a frame, struck with the bare hand.

Naghareh - kettle drum played with sticks. The drums are made of metal; earlier ones were made of clay, and some used in India today still are. The naghareh is of Persian origin.

Kemantche - the spiked fiddle is found all over the Islamic world. The spike at the bottom protrudes like the spike of a cello and it is on this that the instrument rests while being played. It has four strings and is bowed. The body is coconut shaped and covered with a membrane. It has a range of three octaves and is tuned to G below middle C, D, A and E:

Its origins are accredited to Kurdistan and it is supposedly the ancestor of the European rebec which evolved into the western violin. In many instances now in Iran, the violin has begun to replace the kemantche.

TRACKS AND TIMES:

1. Love song - 4:48
2. Zurna and naghareh solo - 4:55
3. Love song - Kemantche, dombek, male singer - 5:26
4. Love song - Kemantche, dombek, male singer - 5:10
5. Nay solo - 4:35
6. Love song - Setar and male singer - 5:29
7. Love song - Nay and male singer - 4:15
8. Love song - Zurna, dombak, daf and male singer - 5:18

NOTES ON TRACKS:

MUSIC FROM LURISTAN

Track 1 - Nay and male singer. Love song. This is in a very pure, old Luri song style.

“Darling, don’t do this to me.

What you are doing is unfair.

My tears are falling like rain.

Soul of my soul,

This separation is unbearable.

Nobody has such a destiny as I do.”

Track 2 - Zurna and naghareh solo.

Track 3 - Nay and male singer. Love song. Old Luri song style. The humming effect the musician makes while playing the nay is known as zemzemeh.

“I am burning,
I have the taste of separation.
What I’ve done to myself
Is worse than anything my enemy could do to me.”

Track 4 - Kematche, dombek, male singer. Love song.

“I want to kiss you.
Remove the scarf, which you wear on your chest
So that I can touch your breasts.
What kind of politics are you doing now?”
Oh, what a sweet tongue you have, Oh, my sweet black dresser.**
I realize I hurt you and I am sorry for what I did.
You are my springtime, ***
Without you I don’t feel I have spring.”

*This song is from the Bakhtiyari tribe, the most organized, aggressive and politically involved of the Lur tribes. This is really a song of lovemaking, and the lyrics are unusual in their straightforwardness.

**The girl he is singing about is in mourning for someone in her family.

***Springtime is very important in Persia. So important that the New Year is celebrated on the first day of spring.

MUSIC FROM THE FARS PROVINCE.

Track 5 - Nay solo.

Track 6 - Setar and male singer. Love song.

“Night and day I am mourning because of you.
All the time you say tomorrow, tomorrow.
When will tomorrow come?
You couldn’t find anyone else with such pain as I have.
I feel as much as Jusef and Zoleikha.”*
*The Persian equivalents of Romeo and Juliet.

Track 7 - Nay and male singer. Love song.

“Your eyes are like two stars.
If only you would come to see me one night I would be re-born.
When you are with me I feel like King Solomon.
From Shiraz to Kerman* many men are dying for you.

I don’t know if you remember the kiss you gave me

when we were hiding in the house.
You are as proud as a peacock.
I tried to pluck one of your feathers,
But you wouldn't let me.
Put a scarf over your hair.
I wish I was a pendant around your neck,
Or a turquoise in your ring.”
*Kerman is a town east of Shiraz

Track 8- Zurna, dombak, daf and male singer. Love song.
“My flower has a sweet tongue.
She does as much as she can for me.
She has captured by heart.
Don't be so coy*,
I know you want to be with me!
Please come with me once to Shiraz.
I don't have any more patience.
I am like a wild flower.
Please stay with me and don't go away.
I caught a baby pigeon in the mountain.
I raised her on my knee,
I didn't realize the pigeon was unfaithful,
and would leave me to return to the mountain.”

*The Persian word for the concept of coy is NAZ and is used here to rhyme with the word Shiraz.

ORIGINALLY RECORDED IN 1974, THIS RECORDING IS NOW PART OF THE LYRICHORD ARCHIVE SERIES.



THE LYRICHORD ARCHIVE SERIES

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