

When will it be our turn to celebrate diversity in thought, feeling and vision?

I had just returned from my vacation. As usual I needed to work very long exhausting hours to compensate for my absence. This night I was sitting in the labor/delivery room waiting for a young couple to give to birth to their first child. Their faces were filled with anxiety wondering and hoping that the baby would be perfect. His wife lay there obviously in pain from the labor. The would be father's forehead contained deep wrinkles and beads of sweat. He was working so hard to compose her. He carefully counted the length of the pains and their intervals. He did everything to reassure her and everything to disguise his apprehension.

Whenever I entered the room to examine her progress he leaped at me with a thousand questions. I could tell he wanted to grab and interrogate me, but his respect for my position allowed me to complete my job. Again I left listening to him reassuring his wife.

I was suddenly called to the phone. On the other line was one of my dearest friends. One I consider to be like a brother. A prominent Iranian figure who has been awarded with honors for his patriotic actions.

We both have busy schedules so it is always a pleasure to hear his voice. After normal greetings he told me that he was near by but was unable to meet me in person because of a time factor. In retrospect, I think that he was shy to confront me in person with the message he was about to give me over the phone.

I thought it was unusual that he would call me at the hospital. I told him to please get to the point because I was about to deliver a baby. He stated that he heard that my name was on a list owned

by The Party of God. This list was about to be published. Those on the list were to be considered traitors to Iran.

I became enraged. The physical exhaustion I already felt was now compounded with frustration, hurt and anger. I could barely ask why my name was on the list. It was found out, he said, that my family donated \$2,000 for building a mosque. He asked me if this was true.

Quickly I replied, "I am a person who was born Moslem and continues to be Moslem. I do not fast nor do I pray five times a day...I believe in God, the Prophet. I am proud of my Persian heritage. I believe that all Iranians, like other religious groups, should at the time of their death or at a time of desperation have a place of their own to worship and pray. Every other religion or ethnic group represented, the Jews, Christians, Bahais, non Persian Moslems, those from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Arabs, Afghans, Armenians Assyrians, Turks, Serb Indians...the list goes on. These centers were built on the individual financial strength of the group. Iranians, on the other hand, because of our selfishness, egos and fears that we will be accused of being connected with an association not acceptable to the political group in power can never be organized enough to build our dream. Same on us, shame on our selfishness. I believed a few years ago I finally found an organization that had the integrity, strength and devotion to finally build a Persian Center and Mosque and yes, without any apology to anyone, I donated \$2,000 dollars. I also promised to donate additional money if they proved to be successful. If we continue to put our individual egos and political views in front of what is good for humanity, we will never succeed. We will be known as the ethnic group, book smart, bank account rich, but lacking common sense and unity and the wealth that comes with friendship and commitment. If this, my friend, is a sign of being a traitor, then label me that way if you like.

I continued by saying, "I am a man

fearful of visiting he birth country. I am a man who never has or will be a part of any political organization. The only commitment I make to any organization is one that is proud of their ethnicity and chooses to continue to educate their family and non-Persians on the rich heritage of Persia. I always believed that one should never forget their origin. Their past is as important to their makeup as the present and future. But I am one who can not touch Iranian soil. Instead, I am constantly the target of false accusations by my fellow Iranians. It is from fear, ignorance, or again, Iranian jealousy."

"I respect all Iranians and all people, who are humanitarians and who are not afraid of their ethnicity. I respect all Iranians and all people, regardless of their political or religious ideologies. To me you can be a member of the Party of this or the Party of that. Neither your membership or your money impress me. To me it is your soul and your mind that determines your wealth and position."

A few years ago I was president of a Persian cultural organization. We invited a very important professor to be a guest speaker for Mehregan. I was called one night and told that a "so-called important and influential" figure in the Persian community called this professor advising him not to speak at this organization. He told the professor that a few members running this organization were considered traitors.

Fearing that the professor might be harassed, I decided to call this man. I invited him to lunch. During lunch I asked him how he had the nerve to call this professor and label us traitors. He answered me by saying that we were traitors because we donated \$2,000 dollars for the building of a mosque. I asked him the following question: "If an American built a church for a Bahai built a religious center, or a Jew built a temple, are they traitors?" "No," he replied. "Why then am I considered a traitor and a traitor?"

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continued on next page*

'Deep bond' realized in Los Angeles

By Lisa Daftari

As a 17 year old living in the scarcely populated Community of Paramus New Jersey, I am proud of my background. I feel that being Persian sets me apart from everyone around me. It is amazing to all that I was born in the U.S. and I have never visited Iran, yet I have such a deep bond with the Persian community. I never realized the existence of this bond until I spent 3 weeks in Los Angeles California this summer.

The Persian population in Los Angeles, better known as "Little Iran", has accumulated to hundreds and hundreds of thousands. These numbers are vivid on the streets of Los Angeles, as well as in the supermarkets, malls, classrooms and any other public places. Seeing an overwhelming number of Persians everywhere one goes has its advantages, but many agree that disadvantages also exist.

Truthfully, I love visiting friends and family in California because I feel a sense of unity and identity when I am in the midst of my people. I like the feeling of driving down a main boulevard and seeing the signs in front of stores written in Farsi. I enjoy hearing Farsi slang spoken on the streets and by kids my age. As a matter of fact, when my cousins took me to a party, I was amazed to see that everyone in the room was Persian, without exception. The DJ played Persian music in between the American dance music and everyone began to dance Persian style. Persian pride fills the classrooms of Los Angeles and these children are most popular while the other kids strive to dress, act and be just like the

Persian ones.

With so many Persians, intermarriage is not found as much in Los Angeles. Parents don't need to worry as much about the future of their children. At any age, most young people hang out with other Persian kids, and by the time they are ready to get married, they go to parties where they have the opportunity to meet potential spouses.

Fortunately, the large Persian community has allowed the so called members of "Generation X" to be the preservers of Persian Culture. These kids have not assimilated as much as other first generation Persian Americans have. When someone from my area finds that my siblings and I speak fluent Farsi, they are shocked and amazed, let alone when I tell them I know how to read and write the language as well. In California though, almost all kids speak Farsi and there are a countless number of institutions available to teach Persian literacy.

The Persians who live in these communities however, see negative aspects as a result of having so many of their own kind living near them. Factors such as jealousy and competition fill the lives of Persians. Everything from beepers and cell phones to fur coats and diamonds rings must be had by all. Education and personality don't seem to matter; the important things in life are what car you drive, what designer clothing you wear, what part of Los Angeles you live in, and who your hair dresser is. A certain standard has been made by the Persians. This standard includes purchasing a house in Beverly Hills, buying the newest car model that Mercedes Benz or BMW had



Lisa Daftari

to offer, hiring a Spanish speaking maid, and sending the kids to an upper class private school. All these are done in spirit of waiting for the next social gathering so that the diamond, furs, and expensive clothing can be showed off. These Persians have the driving desire to possess more material assets than the next person does. This arrangement is fine for a certain elite upper class who honestly have nothing better to do with their time, but how about those who cannot afford to be like the next guy? How about the wives who want to compete in this superficial game but know that their husbands cannot provide them with all that a Persian life "requires"? Why is it that a perfectly eligible young man doesn't have enough courage to ask out a Persian girl, solely because he cannot pick her up in a Mercedes Benz? For these reasons, materialism has made life in these areas unethical and corrupt.

Although the characteristics I have mentioned are directed toward the Los Angeles community, I am aware that these stereotypes exist wherever Persians congregate. Ironically, I believe that the advantages of such communities surely

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BOND

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outweigh the disadvantages. Every time I come home from a vacation spent in California, I feel depressed when I think about how different my life would be if I lived in California, or any other Persian

community for that matter. I feel that my family and I are very lonely since we aren't around Persians. What are the chances that my three siblings and I will marry Persian spouses and go on to speak Farsi in our homes? As much as we all want our Persian background to be a part of our future, the chances of it occurring are slim. In facing reality, I am

sad to say that the fact that my family will soon fully assimilate is something that is inevitable. When all the problems of the Persian Community in California are put aside, one can respect that this community is responsible for keeping the Persian culture for generations to come and ensuring a future for our people.

PH

Armenian, Iranian, American, Italian...

Who says I have to choose?

Hi. I'm
NICE TO MEET YOU
Paola,

by Paola Aghajanian

Paola? Hmmmm...you're not Iranian are you?" "As a matter of fact, I am." "Oh... But

Paola's not an Iranian name!" "I know. It's Italian. But I'm Iranian." "Then how come you don't have a typical Persian name?" "I don't know, I just don't." "Weren't you born in Iran?"

"Yes I was, but I'm of Armenian heritage." "Well, in my opinion, you're just Iranian." "But I'm not just Iranian, I'm Armenian too. I'm Armenian-Iranian." "Then why don't you call yourself Iranian-Armenian rather than Armenian Iranian?"

Oh boy. This is a difficult question to answer. No matter what I call myself, I am bound to disappoint or offend a few people. Nationality is such a heated issue that it usually sparks off debates concerning race, culture, and ethnicity.

When the question of nationality comes up, I always imagine myself filling out an application. Name: Paola Aghajanian. Race: White/Caucasian. Citizenship: U.S.A. Place of birth: Iran.

Wait! Isn't there something missing? Where do I get to say I'm Armenian? Don't they care? Armenians aren't the only group facing this situation. Iran is home to many religious and ethnic minorities - Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Jews, Armenians, Ba'hais, Zoroastrians, and Assyrians just to name a few. Many of us may feel it appropriate or necessary to express our ethnicity along with our nationality - Armenian Iranian, Assyrian-Iranian, or Jewish-Iranian. Speaking for myself, I wish to present my ethnicity along with my nationality because my life is equal parts Armenian and Iranian. I simply cannot say that I am one and not the other.

Nowhere is this more evident in my life than in the celebrations I have enjoyed with my family since childhood. As an Armenian-Iranian family living in the United States, my family has always celebrated the (January 6), Easter, the Persian New Year celebrations (No-rooz and Chahar-Sanbeh Souri), Shab-e Yalda (the winter equinox), Thanksgiving and the American Christmas and New Years.

We get together during each of these holidays (and exchange gifts!!) I can't imagine my life without anyone of them.

This year we celebrated Armenian Christmas as always by attending services at "Saint Mary's Armenian Church" in Glendale Calif., then headed over to my grandmother's for smoked fish, rice, kooko (vegetable pancakes), red wine, and wafers. I received gifts most in the form of "money for college."

which I ended up spending on new dresses (an absolute necessity!) for the upcoming Easter and No-rooz holiday parties. No-rooz is my mother's specialty. She is famous for throwing the best No-rooz bashes. She sets a beautiful Haft-seen table and invites friends and family to our house. Seconds before the New Year begins, she gathers us around the coffee table and asks everyone to look straight at the goldfish in the fish bowl. We are not to look away until the New Year has started, because she believes that the gold fish will freeze for a second at the exact moment the New Year begins, welcoming No-rooz into our homes. Like the celebrations, being

No matter what I call myself, I am bound to disappoint or offend a few people.

both Iranian and Armenian is a gift that I take an extravagant sense of pride in, one that I cherish dearly.

My unique yet combined Iranian and Armenian identities have shaped the person that I am today, each in its own way. When it comes down to addressing the question of calling myself Armenian-Iranian or Iranian-Armenian, I consider it merely a semantic arguments, one that even scholars have not been able to resolve. It really doesn't matter to me. I'm Armenian and Iranian. Or Iranian and Armenran.

PH

THE PEOPLE

...and how they live

IRANIANS, or Persians as they were known in days gone by, are of Aryan stock. They are therefore close relatives of the Germanic or European races—the Germans, Dutch, French, and English—to mention some. Darius I, one of Persia's first great kings, asserted that he was an ariya ariyachissa, i.e. an Aryan of the family of Aryans.

In 1935 the name Iran was officially adopted for the country previously known to the world mostly as Persia, Iran being derived from the ancient word Aryanam, the country of the Aryans.

Over the centuries Iran suffered many invasions and was often torn apart, but the Iranian people always retained their character. As a result of their advanced culture they usually influenced the invaders more than the invaders influenced them. They also seem to have developed a philosophical aloofness which has stood them in good stead. Iranians are known for their open-mindedness and are seldom prejudiced.

As a people they are peace-loving, tolerant, generous, considerate, and friendly.

As for politeness, they are not unlike the Japanese. Elaborate greetings and inquiries about one another's health are almost mandatory, while drinking a cup of tea is part of the preliminaries of almost all visits and interviews. It is polite for an Iranian to refuse an offer of food or drink at least once before accepting it.

Iran today has a population of some 57 million and, as in most developing countries, there has been much migration from the rural to the urban areas, Tehran, the capital, being one of the main attractions.

The rural population may roughly be divided into two types—the settled villagers who engage mainly in agriculture, and the nomadic tribesmen who raise sheep and goats. From ancient times the history of Iran has been strongly influenced by its tribes, and only in

recent years has their influence waned. Strenuous efforts are being made to settle them and teach them modern methods of farming.

The major tribes that have retained their nomadic way of life are the Qashqais, Bakhtiariis, Lurs, Baluchis, Turkomans, and Kurds, although the last two are now mostly settled. The total tribal population adds up to some three million, of which only about a third are ethnically Persian.

Over the centuries the settled villagers have suffered heavily under the migratory way of life, for they were constantly harassed by marauding tribesmen sweeping down from the hills in lightning raids. On the main routes travel always remained hazardous.

Most tribesmen spend about a third of the year on the move, seeking new pas-

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Torn between two worlds...

by Sara Sedigh
(Courtesy of the Iranian Association of
Connecticut Newsletter)

I remember harsh words exchanged between my parents and the angry voices, and then a dry silence in which we would stand completely shattered and emotionally drained, seeking the words to express different feelings, warmer and gentler. I remember sleepless nights, plagued by an uncontrollable desire to cry until my entire soul left my body forever into the dark and lonely night. I remember the loneliness, the fear of not knowing exactly who I was, or who I could turn to for help. Isolating myself, I thought no one could help me, no one could understand.

Not even those who loved me most. If only they knew how many times I wanted to reach out to them and ask them to guide me through this obscure maze which I had to master myself. I was in pain and I was confused, torn between two different worlds, two different worlds of ideas. I existed as an entity in search of a self. To find my own character amidst the turmoil of

friends versus family, opposing cultures, opposing philosophies. I felt myself breaking away, parts of me dying everyday as I drifted through with this current, cruel for its inability to stop time, cruel for its inability to care for its inability to grant me the insight I needed to determine my identity. I struggled with the question of how I could even succeed being Iranian, while living in an American World. Who is right and who is wrong? Who am I? Which roads do I follow? Wrapped up, with no way out, in these endless questions, I thought I would never succeed, never regain my strength I thought that there was no way to compromise myself for the values of my family. Yet one day, my father's words began to reach me. The two worlds began to integrate before me, I felt myself warming up to my mother's touch. I thrust aside the solitude and despair that I had become so dependent on. I looked for the first time to my family of help, and they were there. They had been there all along. I was no longer alone in my struggle to find a balance within myself. My parents and I had helped each other to find this balance. We were still helping each other in finding a road right in the middle where I fit. One in which I can unhaltingly call myself an Iranian young adult in an American society, still in touch with my heritage and all the wonders and delights this entails.

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tures for their flocks. They live mostly in black tents made of goat's hair. In addition to shepherding, the tribes are engaged in numerous pursuits. The men hunt a great deal, while the women weave saddle-bags, carpets, and tents which are remarkably water-repellent, warm in winter, and cool in summer. The carpets woven by the Baluchis and Turkomans are particularly prized by Westerners.

When the nomads trek from one grazing area to another, they pack their possessions on the backs of donkeys or camels. The women and children usually ride on top of the belongings, while the men, on foot or on horseback, steer the livestock. The majority of people in Iran speak Persian, the official language. It is also called Farsi or Parsi after one of the provinces where it first established itself. Like Sanskrit, Persian belongs to the Indo-European linguistic family to which such languages as English, Dutch and German also belong. In the border areas many Iranians speak dialects of Turkish, Kurdish, Luri, Baluchi, and Arahic.

Besides Persian most educated Iranians speak English, French, or German. Modern Persian, which has been spoken since the advent of Islam, is said to be relatively easy to acquire. Like Afrikaans, its grammar is simple because it has shed most of its inflections.

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MAZDAK

THE FORERUNNER OF SOCIALISM

By N. M. Tejarachi, MD

When did the first communist movement occur in history? Certainly not in the nineteenth century, nor was it initiated by Karl Marx! There are sufficient records, written in different languages, which indicate that a socialistic revolution, under the leadership of Mazdak, actually shattered the economic foundations of the Sassanid empire in Iran during the end of the fifth century and beginning of the sixth century A.D.

Records which recount this event are contained in the Pahlavi writings, the Persian writings of the Islamic period, and in Arabic, Syriac and Greek writings which were collected by T. Noldeke and published in German Literature in 1879.

There is a tendency in the Western World to believe that all important historical and ideological events originated in Europe ("Eurocentrism"). However, in one article in American literature regarding the subject (2), the author expresses astonishment about the "silence" in modern literature regarding this important revolution, which he considers to be "an early forerunner of modern Bolshevism."

Unfortunately, the information reaching us about Mazdak is derived only from hostile sources. According to Dabestan, Mazdak had written a special book known as "Desnad," which, subsequently, has been lost.

Mazdak was the son of "Bamdad," a native of the city of Neishapur in

Khorassan, and a high Magus priest of the same city. His doctrine, as described by different sources, is clearly of a communistic nature which sounds surprisingly modern. It preaches equality in the distribution of wealth and property between the members of society; the abolishment of ranks and differences between the poor and the rich and the master and the servant; and the abandonment of the existing marriage laws. He proclaimed that property and marriage were human inventions. He also prohibited the slaughter of animals and the consumption of meat; allowing only the ingestion of milk and eggs from animal sources. He advocated simplicity in clothing and moderation of all pleasures.

"Making women common properties" although attributed to Mazdak, may have been a modification or distortion of facts and, rather, may have consisted of marriage laws, and the emancipation of women. Even in recent times this criticism has been made of Bolshevism as the "Nationalization of women."

It has also been remarked by some that what distinguishes Mazdakism from modern communism is its "religious character." Accordingly, "Mazdak preached Zoroastrianism in its original, uncorrupted form." However, the carrier and deeds of Mazdak do not indicate any religious activities. Neither was he a philosopher like Plato, content only to write a theory of an ideal communistic state. Rather, Mazdak was a militant social reformer.

In Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh," Mazdak

was described as educated, ambitious, eloquent and persuasive, and he was accepted by King Ghobad (or Cavades) of Iran (488-531 A.D.). The occurrence of a severe drought, which affected the economy of the country, may also have favorably affected Mazdakism in attracting the poor and the peasantry. "People became more violent, forcibly entering the properties of the rich and demanding contributions, and not having much resistance."

During the early years of king Ghobad's reign, there was an uprising which resulted in his deposition and imprisonment in the "Castle of Oblivion." Ghobad's younger brother, Jamasp, who was then still a child, was put on the throne (496-498 A.D.) Ghobad escaped from prison after a few years and regained the throne with the help of the Hitalians (or the Huns). Although this event was not related to Mazdak, some writings reveal that this event took place after Ghobad had accepted Mazdakism which resulted in his imprisonment by the nobles and clergy; and that Ghobad actually regained the throne with the help of Mazdakites, who opened the gates for him.

Mazdak was appointed by the king as Minister (Dastour) and Treasurer. In the following years, Mazdak and his party did everything in their power to take from the rich and give to the poor. As exemplified in "Shahnameh," "When a mob of famine stricken people gathers at the gates of the royal palace, demanding 'bread and water,' Mazdak, an intermediary between the people and the king finally resolves the matter by sending the people to open the storage of wheat. Then he tries to convince the King by stating, 'what would be the use of having storages of wheat if people are dying from hunger...' Ferdowsi continues, cit-

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ing how the rich had to give whatever they could to the poor, "...the commoners became equal to nobles... From every corner people went to Mazdak and a great army came under his command..." etc.

The king had four sons, the eldest, Kavus, who was in favor of Mazdakism, was not favored by the nobles and clergy; instead, Ghobad's third son, Khosrow A Nooshirvan, an orthodox Zoroastrian, was chosen as crown prince. In his address to the king, Mazdak comments upon the, "five evils which divert the human race from righteousness: jealousy, anger, revenge, need and greed, all being due to uneven distribution of wealth and women..." When the king asks the crown prince about his opinion regarding the acceptance of Mazdak's ideas, he replies that he will give his answer after a five-month respite. Then he sends for men of wisdom, scholars and philosophers from all over the empire, for a public dispute with Mazdak.

On the day of disputation, a large number of dignitaries and men of wisdom gather in the royal audience hall. The arguments in favor of Mazdak were not recorded; however, those against him were, and sounded strangely modern: "According to your creed," the high priest asks, "if wealth and women are to be equally shared by men, who then would be the one to do the labor and the one to keep order?... If there is no difference between the king the laborer, who will work for you and me? If every one is to be a master, who will take orders? If everyone is to own a treasure, who will be the treasurer?... How will a father know his son, and the son his father? When a man dies, who will inherit him?"

Accordingly, the king is finally convinced of the "wickedness" of Mazdak and gives permission to Khosrow to "do as he wishes with him." However, it is hard to accept that the king was con-

vinced as a result of a public debate. Perhaps due to the political and economic changes, the occurrence of wars and other factors, he may have become more cautious toward Mazdakism. There is also evidence that in addition to Orthodox Zoroastrians, the minority groups, especially the Christians and Jews, strongly opposed Mazdakism.

Finally, a large number of Mazdakites, including many nobles who had accepted



Mazdakism, were assembled in a large garden (believed to be Khosrow's) and were massacred under Khosrow's direction. Then Mazdak, not knowing what was happening, was summoned by Khosrow, who told him, "enter this magnificent garden and see the crops of the seeds you planted in this world!" Upon his entrance, Mazdak was shocked by such a horrible scene. Then Khosrow ordered that Mazdak be hanged, head down, and shot with arrows.

As to the duration of the Mazdakites' domination; one can only estimate that they were in power for at least twenty years, since they were believed to have been an important factor in Ghobad's return to the throne (498 A.D.), and also to have dominated the empire until the last years of Ghobad's 43 years of reign (around 531 A.D.).

With regard to the extent of

Mazdakites' domination, it has been recorded in Khosrow's speech to the nobles and clergy after his coronation, that he dwells upon the ruin of their religion and the heavy losses that they incurred. Khosrow also made systematic regulations for the purpose of compensating the sufferers, and establishing the position of children of doubtful origin, etc. This indicates that the social changes must have been considerable, and that

the upper classes suffered heavy damages. There is evidence that certain social reforms remained long after the crisis was over. According to "Shahnameh," the tax which used to be one-third to one-fourth of a person's income, was reduced to one-tenth by king Ghobad, and remained as such during Khosrow's reign. This is the same Khosrow-Anoushervan who became to be known as a "just" king.

There is evidence that Mazdakism survived for centuries in secret. Some two hundred years later, under the Arab's domination, an uprising occurred under the leadership of a man called Almucanna, who declared himself as an "incarnation of God," and preached, "all the laws and institutes that Mazdak had established." Also, some three hundred years after Mazdak's uprising, in the beginning of the ninth century A.D., the followers of Mazdak (interestingly called by the Arab rulers as "Mohamira," meaning "reds" or "red-makers") waged a three year war against the Moslem empire of Abassids. Also, the "Khorramis" (or "Khorramdinis") who developed a religious crisis in the eleventh century are known to have been followers of Mazdakism. Finally, after 1500 years, the principles of Mazdak's teachings reappeared in a more sophisticated form of modern communism.

In more recent articles covering the subject, Mazdakism is believed to have influenced the doctrines of Druzes of Lebanon and the present time Iranian culture and religion.

Hafiz

The Man and His Time

F.A. Sadeghpour

In 1355 the last Mongol emperor, Abu Sa'eed, died in Iran, and the house of Hulaga (Holauku) crumbled away. During the reign of Abu Sa'eed one of his commanders, Mohammad Mozaffar known as Amir Mobaurez-e-din, had earned some recognition for valor in the service of the last emperor, and was appointed as the Ataubac of Yezd. Mohammad Mozaffar and his numerous sons began to build up a formidable force to guarantee his power. Meanwhile, he was always envious of the Ataubs of Shiraz. Their territory extended from Shiraz all the way to the port cities and Islands of the Persian Gulf, including Bahrain and the opposite shores.

After two unsuccessful expeditions towards Shiraz, Mohammed Mozaffar finally succeeded in 1357 to defeat Abu Is'Haq the chancellor of Shiraz. Before the last battle, rumor has it that while Mohammad Mozaffar was behind the walls of Shiraz Abu Is'Haq was in a drunken stupor. His vizir helped him to climb up to the roof of the palace to enjoy the spring of Shiraz. Abu Is'Haq expected to see his capitol city, "bathed in lavender and scarlet flowers many fountains and pools playing down the glistening blue and gold tiled steps, where lines of water bubbling as pure as strings of pearls that made the city like a princess canopied with hazy, colorful silk." Instead, behind the city gates, he noticed the glimmer of shields and lances of an army. He

inquired from his vizir the meaning of this demonstration of force. The vizir replied that it was the army of the Amiri. Abu Is'Haq with amazement remarked, "What a fool! Does he not know that in

the new laws. The Amir was so ardent that he himself was making rounds in the city to make certain that he was obeyed; his surname became "Amir the Sheriff." This became one of the periods in which

reason was despised and chaos was embraced. But our poet, Hafiz, retained his levity and continued his divine profusion of versification:



Painting by Saadegh Goozari

I am not a rogue who leaves beloved and flagon behind, The "sheriff" knows seldom such things enter my mind I'm the one with tears of ruby and sapphire, Why would I set my sights upon the bounty of sun's fire? Though am poor, I have sultan's treasure in hand. Why would I long for spinning sphere which fosters mean men?

— F.A.S .

such a beautiful season with his campaign he is spoiling his and my merriment? After a short period of imprisonment, Mohammad Mozaffar had Abu Is'Haq beheaded in an open field within sight of the silent ruins of Persepolis,

When Mohammad Mozaffar became the lord of Shiraz, his first edict was to close all taverns, and made it known that music was the sound of evil. He had many sycophants around him to comply with his religious zeal, and to conform to

Hafiz versified the beauty which creates as many woes as it bestows delight, and spoke of those who battered the sorrows of the poor and unfortunate ones. The profligacy of the religious zealots and sanctimonious judges and sheikhs closed the taverns of the city. "The taverns besides being a place of merriment and a gossiping hall for youths whose wandering eyes detected passing maids of more than opulent charms," also served as the gathering

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place of some men of letters and artisans who exchanged ideas and news from throughout the empire. The existence of taverns in Shiraz was not an anomaly, rather they were playing the same role as the cafes or cafe chantant in sister cities in Europe. Hence by closing taverns and all the bacchanals that went with it, many men including Hafiz were extremely disappointed. "But, instead of sniffing and tasting the ambrosial vapor and essence of their elixir redolent of minor sin in the tavern," they must have established these soirees within the closed doors of their residences. Hafiz composed many odes related to the very same circumstances. One of these odes reads as follows.

"Would it be possible they throw the tavern's door open, And the knot of hindrance in our affairs, untie and open? If tavern is closed for the whim of a selfish zealot, Be brave. For the sake of Lord it may be open. Due to the serenity of rogues and wont of wine, With their key word prayer, many a door did open."

—F.A.S.

However, with the demise of Abu Is'Haq, the medley period of relative disorder and tranquility was definitely replaced with civil wars, total civil disorder, fratricide, and patricide. The first victim to fall was the victorious Amir Mohammad Mozaffar Mobaurez. His son Shah Shojau' seized his father, the Amir, blinded him then imprisoned him in the Ghal'eh-Sefeed until his death. Shah Shojau' preceded to reign in Shiraz and his brother Shah Yahyau ruled in Yezd. Like his father, Shah Shojau' was an energetic man, but his energy was directed into different channels; the stern religious and or pretension of the elder man was reversed into a frenzied dissipated spirit in the younger. Whenever Shah Shojau' was not engaged in conducting expeditions against his brothers cousins, and nephews, he was busy partaking in the wildest orgies in Shiraz. This did not mean that he was less cruel than his brother. In a drunken fit, he

ordered one of his own sons to be blinded. Shah Shojau' was worn out before his time with his licentious living, but it seemed that before his death the death knell of the House of Mozaffar had sounded. Tamerlane and his Tartar hordes were advancing from the northern territory of the Empire and were heading toward the south.

In 1382 Shah Shojau' sent a propitiatory emissary to Tamerlane with gifts. But before long Shah Shojau' died and his son Zain-el-Aubedin sat on his father's throne. It was in 1388 that Tamerlane (Taimur) arrived behind the gates of Shiraz and the people of Shiraz appeased him delaying his wrath and destruction for the time being. It was obvious that Tamerlane had heard of Hafiz' reputation. He was particularly familiar with one of his famous romantic odes. It appears that this was the time the celebrated interview between Hafiz and Timur took place. The ode that created this following anecdote is witty and charming to relate at this time:

*"If ever that Turckic maid of Shiraz molifies my heart
I'll grant away Samarkand and
Boukhara for her beauty mark"*

—F.A.S.

Hafiz was brought before Tamerlane to his royal pavilion. A glacial current was felt in the air, very much like the icy chill one might feel blowing past the glacial mountains of the north. As Hafiz approached the dais, Timur's eyes detected Hafiz, and he loudly expostulated, "Are you the one who grants away my two finest cities in the empire for the beauty mark of a maid? - What's the matter with you?" he cried angrily. "Do you know how many men have been lost to capture those two Cities now a little Persian like you comes along and wants to...to just give them away!" "Sire" calmly replied Hafiz, "it is due to such generosity as this, that I am appearing here before his highness in poor habiliments!" Tamerlane's obsidian eyes as cold and dark as two abandoned tunnels bore on the poet for what seemed a lengthy amount of time; then slowly a smirk broke that dark, leathery and savage face! He then ordered that Hafiz be given the robe of poet laureate of the

empire. Perhaps this anecdote was to show the prowess of Hafiz' wit, and how he could survive under tumultuous circumstances.

There is no record that such a meeting between Hafiz and Tamerlane took place, but many believe that it was probable. Before the arrival of Tamerlane, Zain-el-Aubedin was obliged to flee from Shiraz. Timur spent a short time in Shiraz gathering provisions for his army. Before being called away by disturbances in the north, he appointed the atabac of Yezd, Shah Yahya to take charge of Shiraz. But no sooner were the Tartars gone when another member of the house of Mozaffar by the name of Mansur, overthrew his uncle and possessed himself of Shiraz. He refused to be intimidated by Tamerlane or pay any tribute to him. Consequently, in 1393 Timur in command of 30,000 hand picked fighting men, advanced towards Shiraz to confront Mansur Mozaffar. Tamerlane already was told that Mansur was no ordinary prince. Mansur Mozaffar was fearless and intelligent. Despite his youth he was an annealed soldier. Mansur with barely 5,000 men, twice charged into the heart of the Tartar army, and at the second charge Tamerlane's own life was threatened. Mansur personally fighting in the thickest of the battle, sent message back to the wings of his force ordering them to support his central attack. Unfortunately, his officers did not obey his command. He fell fighting by the blow of the son of Timur, Shahrokh Mirza, leaving the Tartar conqueror to march triumphantly into Shiraz and into destruction. Courage was a quality in which the members of the house of Mozaffar were not deficient, but among a race of soldiers Mansur seems to have been distinguished for his reckless bearing. He too, like the other members of his family, was a patron of learning. On account of their patriotism and their bravery, Timur knew that there would be no peace for him in Shiraz, particularly in the south while one member of the house of Mozaffar remained alive. Mansur's survivors were put to the sword.

Fortunately, it appears that Hafiz did not live to see the second expedition of Timur and the destruction of his beloved

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Shiraz. Hafiz had found the peace in death which he had never achieved in life. The exact date of his death is uncertain, however it is known to be between 1388 and 1394. It seems unlikely though that he lived later than 1394. A couplet by an unknown author is inscribed upon his tomb: "If you must know when he sought an eternal home in the sod of Mosallau, seek the date in the dust of Mosallau." According to some abcedarians, the letters of the Persian words Khauk-e-Mosallau, dust or earth of Mosallau corresponds with the number 791, that is 1389 A.D. He lies in the garden of Mosallau, a garden the praises of which he was never tired of singing, and "on the banks of the Roknaubaud, where he had so often with a cup of ruby wine in hand, rested under the shade of the cypress tree."

Since then, Hafiz' verses have become a living faith which has engendered the most solid confidence and inner peace that Iranians have ever known. Like some of his contemporaries, Hafiz was not given to a total sentimentality that was both a burden and a blessing of his race. Instead, he teaches through his poems that God intended man to live happily and in peace; that man could learn to know, serve, and believe in Him; that man believes God is a positive choice for Right. His cogent mind reveals that having pure faith in God is the ultimate virtue and a mystic patrimony of his ancient land. The strange rites in which God has to be worshipped which were invented by man, in most cases, disguised a

total perversity which is believed to be the undisputed virtuosity! He knew innocent people believed these rituals for the same reason that most men believe, because they want to believe.

I would like to exemplify the Scottish poet, Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) and his elegy, "The Last Man". In this work, there is a stanza which is uncannily a reminder of one of Hafiz' odes, which could be titled, "The First Man" In this poem it seems as though Hafiz were expecting some one with the same kindred spirit, a sensitive and talented poet as Campbell who could write an elegy such as "The Last Man". I imagine if they had lived in the same country and century, perhaps, they would have sought each other's company, and over many a cup of wine, they would have had long sessions of cathartic talk. Then, they would embrace one another and say farewell until the next time they would again meet. Hafiz wrote his ode of "The First Man" about the man who receives the gift of "love" on the first day on earth! It follows thus,-

*In the void of night last
I envisioned a throng of
seraphs pass
To rap on the tavern door.
Diligently kneading man's
clay
To mold, to forge and play
Mankind as ne'er before."*

F.A.S. -Hafiz from "The First Man"

*"I saw a vision in my sleep
That gave my spirit strength
to sweep
Adown the gulf of time!
I saw the last of human
mould
That shall creation's death
behold,
As Adam saw her prime."*

—Thomas Campbell "The Last Man"

Both poets were purely and pre-eminently visionary. Much beauty exceeding splendor of diction, lyric, melody and imagery were their exquisite charm of versification.

Hafiz teaches us that, not every sage lacks pedantry, not every gallant lack libertinism, not every wit lacks vulgarity and not every purist lacks absurdity. He tried to deal with platitudes whether hidden or obvious insults to man's intelligence by devious judgment. In conclusion my favorite ode of Hafiz comes to mind:

*"To reach the heart's desire,
plant the friendship tree,
Uproot the sprig of enmity
lest it'll become a dire
calamity.*

*If as a guest in a tavern,
bestow honor upon the rake,
Quaff sparingly dearest,
intoxication constitutes wine
headache.*

*Revel in nocturnal company,
long after we are gone,
This spinning sphere will have
many a moon and many a
sun."*

—F.A.S.

O thou sweet Prince of Verse, in thy final rest and native home, may the angels keep thee in peace.



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From D'Arcy's 1901 Concession to the Establishment of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company

by Kamrouz Pirouz

The possibility that there might be oil in Iran was first investigated in 1891 by Jacques de Morgan, as head of a French archeological expedition, and by the order of the Governor of province of Kermanshah. De Morgan published his findings in *Les Annales de Mines* in 1892. He claimed that oil existed in the region near the Persian-Mesopotamian border.

The fact that oil almost certainly existed in Persia was brought to the attention of an Englishman called William Knox D'Arcy. The man most responsible for this development was Antoine Kitabgi, an Iranian of Armenian origin who had been the director general of the Persian customs. He had been one of Nsir al-Din Shah's entourage on the monarch's European trips. In 1900 he was in charge of organizing the Persian display at the international exhibition in Paris. While there he looked for possible concessionaires to invest in oil exploration in the country. He raised the question with Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in Paris, asking him if he knew any capitalist who might be interested in investing in oil in Iran. A month later Sir Henry Wolff informed him that he had found the right man, William D'Arcy.

D'Arcy, who had made a fortune in the gold mines of Australia, was indeed the right man for the job. After he had investigated a report by a geologist on the possibility of oil in the area, he became interested in obtaining a concession from the Iranian government, and send his representatives there for this purpose. The concession was granted and signed on May 28, 1901 in D'Arcy's behalf by his attorney, Alfred Marriot, and for Persia by Mozaffar ed-Din Shah. Since Russia at the time was the other major power with influence in Iranian affairs, the five northern provinces of Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazanderan, Khorasan, and Astrabad were excluded from the concession. Since the country did not yet have a constitutional assembly, the Shah's signature



was sufficient to formalize the concession. Under this agreement, D'Arcy was granted 3:

- 1 For a period of 60 years, i.e. up to year 1961, an exclusive right to explore, exploit, and refine oil throughout the whole country with the exception of the five mentioned northern provinces.
- 2 The concessionaire was allowed to use free of charge all the uncultivated land belonging to the state that might be necessary for his work.
- 3 Imports of equipment and exports of oil and oil products were to be free of all taxes.
- 4 The concessionaire was entitled to found one or several companies after giving prior notice to the Iranian government concerning their status and locations. The first company was to be established within two years if the concession were not to be null and void.
- 5 After setting up the first exploration company, the concessionaire was to pay the Iranian government £ 20,000 in cash and £ 20,000 in paid-up shares.

- 6 The concessionaire also had to pay annually 16 per cent of the net profits of any company or companies that might be formed.
- 7 The Persian Government was to appoint a commissioner to advise, and to be consulted by the concessionaire and the directors of the companies. He was to establish by agreement with concessionaire such supervision as he might deem "expedient to safeguard the interest of the Imperial Government." The concessionaire was to pay the commissioner an annual sum of £ 1,000 for his service, beginning with the date of the formation of the first company.
- 8 On the expiration of the concession in 1961, all physical assets were to become the property of the Iranian Government free of charge.
- 9 Any dispute which might arise as to the interpretation of the concession was to be submitted to a board of arbitration in Tehran composed of one representative each of the company and the Government, and a third member chosen by the other two.

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In accordance with this agreement D'Arcy organized the First Exploration Company in May 1903, with a capital of 600,000 in shares of £ 1 each, largely subscribed to by himself. The Persian government received 20,000 in shares, and £ 20,000 in cash. In addition D'Arcy had to pay those in Iran who had secured the concession for him, including Kitabgi. He paid a total of £49,000, of which £ 19,000 was in cash and £30,000 in shares. Of these, £20,000 worth in shares and £ 10,000 in cash went to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Mines, and the Foreign Minister, all of whom had received some cash before the signing of the concession. 4

For the actual drilling in Iran D'Arcy found George Bernard Reynolds, a tough Royal engineer who had previously drilled oil in the Dutch East Indies. Reynolds left for Iran where he employed a team of Polish drillers who had worked in the Russian oil fields of Baku. Reynolds and his team, however, soon faced a new problem. When they took their drilling equipment to the Masjid Sulaiman area for drilling they faced the opposition of the local Bakhtiari tribesmen. Iran at the time was not a unified country, and many of the local tribes did not obey the authority of

the central government. British interference in Iran's domestic affairs starts a new chapter with oil exploration. Instead of referring the matter to the Iranian government, the Foreign Office asked John Richard Preece, the British Consul General in Isfahan, to help the D'Arcy group to resolve the problem. 5 Preece persuaded the Bakhtiari Khans to decrease their demands, and finally an agreement was signed with their chiefs giving them 3 per cent of the shares in any company which exploited the oil in their territory. As a result the Bakhtiari Oil Company Ltd., with 400,000 shares of £1 each, was formed to prospect for oil in the Bakhtiari territory other than those operated by the First Exploration Company. 6

Before D'Arcy could discover oil in a commercial quantity, his original capital was almost exhausted, and he began to look for financial assistance. D'Arcy was about to sell the concession to a French investor, Baron Alfonse de Rothschild when the British Admiralty, concerned that it might fall in non-British hands, expressed an interest. The Admiralty advised Lord Strathcona of the Burmah Oil company to cooperate with D'Arcy. In 1905 the Concession Syndicate Ltd. was formed with D'Arcy as a director. The new company took over the assets of the First Exploration Company and provided additional financial resources for continuing operations. 7

Despite infusion of new financial

resources, financing an uncertain project in an unknown area was a difficult and risky undertaking. Early in 1908, in an effort to decide whether it was worth continuing with the operation, Burmah Oil sent an investigator to Iran who upon his return reported that any further exploration would be unproductive. A cable was accordingly sent to Reynolds instructing him to stop work, dismantle the equipment worth the cost of transporting, and return home. Reynolds was very upset with the cable. He, however, decided to keep drilling until the receipt of written confirmation of the cable ordering him to stop. And at 4:00 a.m. on the morning of May 26, 1908, oil was struck at a depth of 1,180 feet in Masjid Sulaiman. At last D'Arcy and his associates, with a total capital expenditure of £ 400,000 over eight years, had succeeded in discovering oil in Iran. For its time, both the period devoted to exploring for oil and the initial capital investment were significant. The task now was to establish a new proper company with adequate financing to handle all aspects of the operation. On April 14, 1909 the Anglo-Persian Oil company was formed, with an initial capital of £ 2,000,000, with Lord Strathcona as chairman and D'Arcy as a director. 8

Kamrouz Pirouz teaches economics at Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, N.J.

FOOTNOTES:

This article is part of a much larger research project dealing with history of oil in Iran from D'Arcy's oil concession of 1901 to the 1933 oil agreement. I wish to thank my colleague professor Thomas Cassidy for his editorial help and enlightening comments of the original article. I also wish to thank Sir Denis Wright for reading the original paper and his several helpful comments.

1 Benjamin Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*. (John Wiley & Sons, N.Y. 1973), 14.

2 In other areas besides oil Drummond Wolff left important impressions on Persia's commercial scene. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was the son of the Rev. Joseph Wolff, a German Jew who had emigrated to England. Sir Henry, after some years as a diplomat, became active in international finance. He sat in Parliament as a Conservative for ten years. From 1887 to 1890 he was Minister in Tehran. His main task was to attract British commerce and capital to Persia as a means of making the country less vulnerable to Russian penetration.

In 1872 Baron Julius de Reuter, another German Jew who had become a naturalized British subject, received a very important concession which gave him the exclusive rights for seventy years throughout Persia for tramways, mining, irrigation, water works and exploitation of the state forests. The

Shah, under domestic pressure by the ulama and foreign pressure from Russia, had to cancel the concession one year later in 1873. Reuter, who expected some compensation, was offered a new concession in 1889 giving him exclusive banking and mining rights for sixty years. It was the energetic support of his old friend Drummond Wolff that secured him the concession. The Reuter bank, known as the Imperial Bank of Persia, became an important institution in the country's politics of the day.

Drummond Wolff also was instrumental in securing another important concession for an old friend Major Gerald Talbot. This was the ill-fated fifty-year monopoly of the production, sale, and export of Persia's entire tobacco crop granted in 1890. This concession received extreme opposition by the ulama and a call by them on all Persians to boycott the consumption of tobacco until the concession was canceled. In 1891 Ayatollah Shirazi's force ultimately forced Naser al-Din Shah to give in to public demand and cancel the concession.

Drummond Wolff was also an early champion of the idea of an Anglo-Russian accord concerning Persia. Some years later, in 1907, his ideas bore fruit in the Anglo-Russian accord which divided the country into the British and the Russian zones of influence with a neutral zone in between. The northern zone was to be dominated by Russia, the southern zone by England, and the neu-

tral zone under Persian control. The British, being deeply concerned about their interest in India, hoped by securing Russia's cooperation in Persia to check her advance towards India. See Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians During the Qajar Period, 1787-1921*. (William Heinemann Ltd. London, England, 1977), 29-31, and 102-112.

3 Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*, 15-16; for full text of the concession see League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 13th year, 1932, 2305-2308.

4 Mostafah Fateh, *Panah Sal Nafte' Iran*, 2nd Ed. (Fifty Years of Persian Oil, Tehran: Kavesh Publishers), 254. See Also Mostafah Elm, *Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and its Aftermath*. (Syracuse University Press, 1992), 9.

The oil discovery in Iran and formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company coincided with the constitutional revolution there (1906-11) during the Qajar dynasty. D'Arcy's agreement was signed during the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, who was the fifth ruler of Qajar dynasty. Mozaffar al-Din Shah was a weak and mostly ill monarch who came to power after the assassination of his father Naser al-Din Shah on May 1, 1896 on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of his reign.

Mozaffar al-Din Shah continued the excesses of his father's luxurious life and in particular imitated his father's European travels, from which he was

deliberately barred while he was a prince. He visited Europe three times between 1900 and 1905 for pleasure as well as medical treatment, incurring massive public debts which had to be financed by such means as the sale of concessions. One reason that foreign nationals such as D'Arcy could easily obtain favorable concessions was twofold: one, that they would bribe the Anglophile members of the court close to the Shah; and secondly, the cash-starved kings of the Qajar dynasty found the advance cash payments a God-given gift for their lavish life style. The only credit that one can concede Mozaffar al-Din Shah is that he signed the constitutional decree on his deathbed a few days before he passed away in 1906.

Mohammad Ali Shah, son of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, succeeded his father in 1907. He was raised in the city of Tabriz in Azerbaijan, as was customary at the time to keep the crown prince away from the capital Tehran. He was pro-Russian partly because he received his early education under a conservative Russian tutor, and partly because he felt that British were in favor of the constitutional cause. He saw the revival of Qajar rule not in parliamentary rule but in absolutist monarchy on the model of Russia at the time. He remained suspicious of constitutionalists, and his suspicion turned into open hostility when, in early 1908, there was an assassination attempt on his life. His hostility towards revolutionaries led to the coup

of 1908 when he bombarded the newly formed Majlis (parliament) with Cossack forces under Russian command. He was eventually deposed by a coalition of constitutionalists and sent to exile in Russia with a generous pension. His son, Ahmad Shah, a boy of only 12 years, ascended the throne. His shaky rule lasted from 1909 to 1925, when he was deposed by Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty. For this and other accounts of Iran's constitutional movement see Edward G. Brown, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*. New Edition (Mage Publishers, Washington, D.C. 1995). Or see Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh Mashrateh-Yi Iran* (History of Iran's Constitutional Movement, Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1370). For a delightful account of life in the Qajar courts and some of the ruling personalities see Abbas Amanat, ed. *Taj Al-Saltana* (Crowning Anguish. *Memories of a Persian Princess from the Harem to Modernity, 1884-1914*. (Mage Publishers, Washington, D.C. 1993), especially 317-32.

5 Elm, *Oil, Power, and Principle*, 10.

6 Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*, 16. The 3 per cent, a substantial income for a tribal group, was decided, without consulting the Iranian government, to be deducted from the 16 per cent share of Iran.

7 Ibid., 17

8 Fateh, *Panah Sal*, 258

Interview

At 38 years old Frank Wildhorn has achieved what so many of us only dares to dream.

There is little doubt that he will continue this path of success. He is true to himself, loyal to those who love him and willing to give back to those who have contributed to his accomplishments. I knew within seconds after meeting Frank that I would be given an honest interview. He was gracious, warm and genuine. Why did we choose to interview Frank Wildhorn to compliment our other feature story Lofti Mansouri? They have so many commonalities and yet come from two very diverse backgrounds. The love of their arts and their belief in their talents brought them success and each is passionate in their idea to expose their art to young people.

To Frank Wildhorn the greatest influence in his music was the world around him, but the greatest influences to his life were his parents. Born in Harlem New York he became interested in music at a very early age. While his peers were listening to the pop music of the day he was falling in love with all types of music especially the musical theater. At 14 he left NYC to take up residence in Ft. Lauderdale where his first semi professional musical experience took place.

FW. Friends of mine started a band called Sunrise Highway. At first we played proms and sweet sixteens and then graduated to clubs. We had a good run. My experience with the band was very beneficial to my musical growth. I surrounded myself with people who were better than I and I learned as much as I could from their style and discipline. I knew while a member of the group that music was to be my life.

PH How did your parents handle that

decision?

FW. (With a warm smile) Oh eyebrows raised and I knew I was in for a heart to heart talk. After I informed them that I did know the perils of the business they offered me their support. One thing they always provided me with was a place of normalcy one filled with love and support.

[Frank Wildhorn moved to California. He continued his education there and graduated from U.S.C.]

PH. Looking around your office, I see so many memoirs of your success. When you reflect back do you see your climb up the ladder of success as a struggle.

FW. To obtain any level of success you need to pay your dues. Recognition does not come easy. I worked hard but I never really thought of it as a struggle. I had very high goals and knew that I had to earn my golden ring. While at U.S. C. I needed to earn some cash to pay my bills, so I became a fixture at the publishing companies trying to get a publishing deal. If you are a writer who does not perform ones own music, you need a publishing deal. Getting my first deal was very difficult. I had my share of doors closed in

Frank Wildhorn



"Be true to your talent and to yourself."

my face. After a while I did finally get a break and my first deal. It was in 1984 Stacy Lattisaw recorded "We Could Make Miracles Together".

In the music business where writers do not perform their songs it is imperative

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to become a member of the club of writers who have their songs recorded. It's hard to get in but once you are, performers and producers begin to ask you for songs.

PH. When did the music business finally bring you financial independence?

FW. In the late 80's. My greatest reward is not the financial but rather acceptance of my peers and the public. You do, however, need financial freedom to pursue your theatrical dreams. Between 1983-90 I had about 150 of my songs recorded. With this came the financial freedom I needed to pursue musical theater.

PH. The list of performers singing your songs is voluminous. Could you give us a few of their names, and I apologize to those not mentioned, space is limited.

FW. Whitney Houston, Kenny Rodgers, Natalie Cole, Sammy Davis, Jr. The Moody Blues, Peabo Bryson, John Raitt, Julie Andrews, Liza Minnelli.....

ON COLLABORATION

*PH. By definition collaboration means "to work together and you have certainly worked with some of the best Nan Knighton on the *Scarlet Pimpernel*, Leslie Bricusse on *Jekyll and Hyde* and Jack Murphy on *Civil War* to name a few, do you have any favorites?*

FW. Interesting question but in one word, NO. I have been fortunate to have worked with people I admire and respect. Each experience is memorable and each has its high and low point.

ON TO BROADWAY

PH. You seemed to have been, for lack of a better word, ignored by those in "control" of the New York Theater. Do you think it is your music style that has hindered your acceptance into this group?

FW. The New York Theater is controlled by a small elitist group. They have often knocked me for the music found in my musicals. They would prefer that I write something more traditional. I could sit down and write something that is quite avant garde. The critics might find this interesting but I would be letting myself down. I am not interested in writing something that will bring a few people to the theater for a short period of time. I would rather write something that will endure after the curtain comes down~ something that will have a life outside of its stage performance.

PH. Your music clearly reflects this philosophy and does have a life of its own outside the soundtrack. Do you feel it is worth the criticism you have received?

*FW. Absolutely. Getting something produced on Broadway is very hard and takes so long I knew when I finally got here that I needed a hit, a home run: I put that philosophy into everything I do, whether it is for a two-man act on Broadway or a multi million dollar project like *Jekyll and Hyde* or the *Scarlet Pimpernel*. I also knew that to make my mark I would have to develop something that would be popular outside the New York Theater and something everyone would enjoy. I do that with no apology.*

ON JEKYLL AND HYDE

*[Clearly Frank's philosophy, to be true to yourself has worked. This passed March after a lengthy and successful national tour, he opened his first Broadway production *Jekyll and Hyde*. This was a collaboration with Leslie Bricusse. During the tour the play developed a cult following.]*

*PH. *Jekyll and Hyde* has inspired many younger people and former theatergoers to return to the theater. It is a play that contains all the elements necessary for a hit show, three wonderful lead performers, Robert Cuccioli, Linda Eder and Christiane Knoll, an equally impressive supporting cast and ensemble, a respected producer and director, a wonderful musical score and high ticket sales, yet was snubbed at the Tony's,*

why?

FW. Yes, that was very sad. Honestly I cannot give you an explanation that I consider reasonable other than the fact that I have not been accepted into the New York Club. As I stated earlier this is a very tough business and rather than nurture, it eats it's young

PH. Are you bitter about this?

FW. No, that is not my style. I cannot afford to waste my energy on anger or feeling sorry for myself.

PH. It did receive four nominations but not for best musical. This prevented the show from receiving any national television exposure at the Tony's. What are your thoughts on this?

FW. You are correct. A Best Musical nomination allows you the opportunity to perform a number from the show during the award ceremony. This would have put new and talented faces on national television. Linda Eder is without question this season's female 'star.' For whatever reason, the nominating committee continues to put up roadblocks for pop writer and performers coming to Broadway. It will eventually change. If they do not recognize the need to support us, there may be no substantial future audience. It will happen but it will be slow.

*PH. You said that there is no encouragement from "The Club" yet *Jekyll and Hyde* is doing well and the marquee for *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is now hanging at the Minskoff Theater, scheduled to open this November. Someone had to give you some encouragement to move forward.*

FW. Besides my family, the company and the fans I have received encouragement from some wonderful composers and heros that come from another generation of music. John Kandor once said to me "FRANK you are like the first wave at Normandy, you have taken a lot of shots but have made it easier for those who follow. " That's is fine with me, but there are a lot of young people out there-

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need that encouragement. They are destroyed by the shunning and the politics. Don't get me wrong you must be strong in this business and be able to take the blows.

PH. Looking at the record and ticket sales, I have a feeling that the shunning of Jekyll and Hyde has backfired.

FW. People love the show. The cast is receiving a tremendous positive response. After the performance many people wait for autographs.

PH. It is rare to see the entire cast hanging around the front of theater before the performance just chatting with the audience. By the way I do not believe for one second that Frank Wildhorn will be remembered ONLY for paving the way for new writers on Broadway.

How much does your audience effect your decision on a production?

FW. A great deal of influence. I constantly review our web site for comments on the music. It is amazing how much incite their criticism has. I am fortunate to have the ability to release the music to a play prior to its opening

PH. I am sure that you have received a great deal of criticism from the fans for the musical score of the Broadway production of Jekyll and Hyde. I know I felt cheated because of the cuts and charges from the original score. Why the changes to the original score?

FW. A play on national tour is dressed a certain way. When it comes Broadway its costumes often need to be changed. Its like dressing a child. You dress them one way for one event and another way

for something else. Sometimes if you have never been somewhere, you seek the advice of an expert. This is the case for *Jekyll and Hyde*. Our national tour director was G. Boyd. When we came to New York we changed teams and Robin Phillips came on board. We decided to defer to Robin on his suggested changes. Robin has a list of classical credits miles long. He believed the changes were necessary for the more sophisticated New York audience. If a play is going to have any success on Broadway the first lesson you learn is to be a team player.

PH. Do you think the cuts and changes negatively affected the nominations?

FW. No, And I do not believe the cuts

PH. One of the most inspirational songs of this era is from "Jekyll and Hyde, This is the Moment." It is constantly being used in sporting events and other events reflecting an important moment in ones life. Was there something in your life that inspired that song?

FW. Surprisingly, NO. In this part of the play Jekyll is making the most important decision of his life. Leslie and I felt it needed a big number and wrote the song. Actually in the Houston production back in 1990, someone suggested we take the song out. I guess that would have been a major mistake. The success of that song outside of the play is phenomenal. It has been recorded by so

many artists. I am always excited to hear someone in the recording industry do my songs.

PH. What is your next project?

*FW. In November **The Scarlet Pimpernel** will open on Broadway. The music is a collaboration with Nan Knighton and produced by Pierre Casset, Bill Haber and Hallmark, Inc. This is Hallmarks first time on*

*Broadway and I am honored and proud to be a part of this. Then comes **The Civil War**. In the winter/spring of 1998 there will be three separate recordings released of the music. One highlights, the 2 CD set and the score from the national tour. That spring/summer there will be a 2-hour television concert of the music. The national tour will start in Fall 1998 and then we will bring it to Broadway. My dream is to see it become a piece of American history.*

PH. Does this take you through the entire war?

PH. Do you take an active part in the casting?

FW. Yes. On Broadway the author get the final word. I am a very "hands on" individual and believe that this is very important.



Set for The Scarlet Pimpernel. Set designer, Andrew Jackness

or changes were a mistake. The success of this show outside of the nominations is tremendous. The ticket sales are very high. It is a matter of personal opinion on how you want to see the play act out. When it goes back out on tour I will probably reinstate the songs now missing. You must also remember that most of the audiences coming to see the musical have not heard the original score and they love the entire production.

Please see **WILDHORN** on the following page

WILDHORN

from the preceding page

FW.No, from cessation to sunrise at Gettysburg

PH. Where did you get the material for the play?

FW. The script is based on diary entries, speeches and letters that we found from that period.

PH. Will we be seeing Linda Eder in that project?

FW. I don't think so her next role will be in Svengali, is scheduled to open in 1999.

PH. I have read recently that you are working with Sergio Mendes on a project called Carnival, described as the Brazilian River Dance. It is nice to see a pure American composer working with individuals of different ethnic backgrounds. Do you believe that such collaborative endeavors can affect the relationship between different cultures?

FW. Absolutely. I am constantly seeking out individuals of other musical backgrounds to collaborate with. I do not believe that it is done enough. Music and the Arts are something that have no ethnic boundaries.

PH. As we discussed, earlier Persians have a long and rich history in writing, music, poetry and prose. Would you ever consider working with a Persian composer etc. or producing a Persian story?

FW. As a matter of fact I have a project in the works. It is called Sheherazad. Since it is not fully developed, I am not at liberty to say anything else. But yes if there are any individuals of Persian background who would like to collaborate



Cast members of The Scarlet Pimpernel, top to bottom: Terrence Mann, Christine Adrreas, and Douglas Sills.

with me I would be very happy to meet with them.

PH. You have a great deal in common with Lofti Mansouri the director of the San Francisco Opera and other featured story in this issue. You are both determined to bring the American Opera and Theater, respectively, back to life and

popularity. You also both want to attract the younger generation and also continue to entertain the senior theater and opera viewers. One of his projects is promoting the arts in the schools especially in light of the budget cuts in the arts. Do you feel children's knowledge of the arts is important and if so what are you personally doing to attract and educate this generation?

FW. If you do not get a child's attention for the classics at an early age it will be very difficult to have them return until they are much older. We all know that we go through changes of musical taste. It is imperative that we turn them on to all forms of music at a very early age. If not our audiences will become smaller and smaller. I am always trying to come up with new children's projects. Currently I am working on a children's production called *Big Nose*, about a 14 year old Cyrano DeBurgerac

PH. In closing are there any words of wisdom or inspiration that you would like to leave with our readers.

FW. You must always follow your heart and your visions. Be true to your talent and to yourself. If you believe in yourself the words "rejection" and "no" should not be part of your life. Use those words as a stimulus to push even harder. I would again like to stress the importance of family unity in the music business. You need something in your life that provides you with normalcy and stability and "a real home for the heart".