

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زیاتهای اروپایی

BY AHMAD SOHEIL AHMADI

06.05.2021

## *Afghanistan's Musical Tradition: a Health Check*

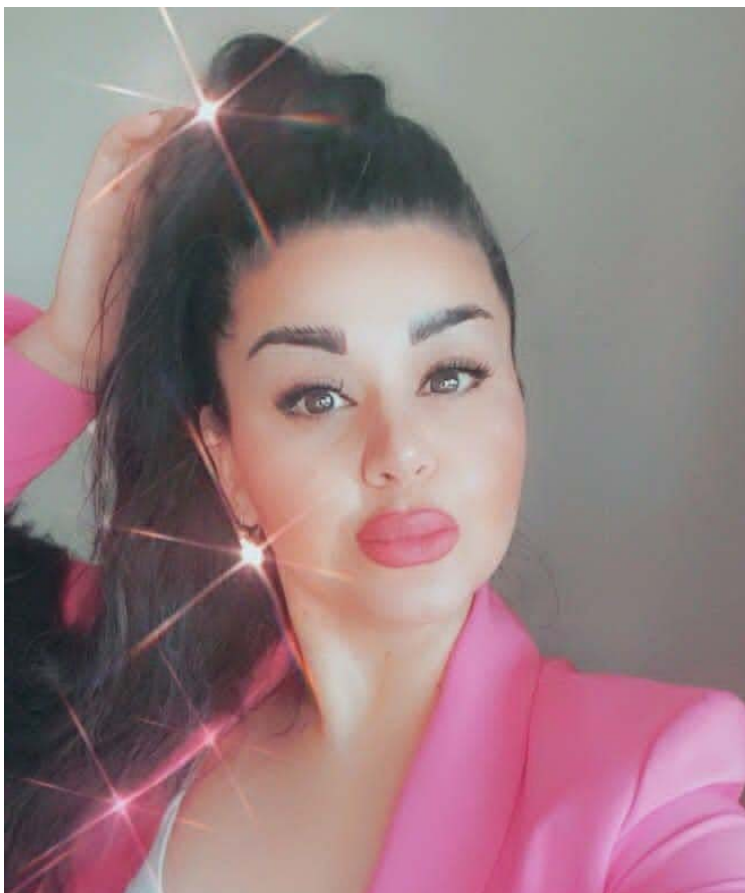


Photo courtesy of Farideh Taraneh.

In the midst of war, insecurity and chaos, the music and songs of Ahmad Zahir, Farhad Darya, and others make the souls of Afghans happy. In durhams and nightclubs, whether in Kabul or in foreign countries, there is the sound of the tambourine, the tar, and the

rabab, sounds that remind all Afghans of the good days. If Afghan music does not make you happy, it will at least reduce the grief of isolation or war. The question that is important for art lovers and artists these days is whether we will see Afghan music in Afghanistan after the peace with the Taliban.

That is why Ahmad Soheil Ahmadi spoke with Ms. Farideh Taraneh. Ms. Taraneh is an Afghan singer of renown, who came onto the Afghan music scene many years ago. Since fleeing to Europe, Farideh has developed her talent and become a beloved artist among the Afghan people.

In this interview, we talked about the current state of Afghan music, women's post-peace activities with the Taliban, reform or struggle against the Taliban, the younger generation of Afghan musicians, and the potential post-peace future of Afghan music.

***ASA: How do you see the situation of women in Afghanistan after the possible coming peace?***

It generally depends on the peace agreement and what commitments the parties sign up to. However, we are negotiating with those who do not recognize our official government, and Afghan society has a dark and terrifying experience from the time of the Taliban in their minds, and they cannot forget the past.

I very much wish for peace, as seeking an end to the fighting has cost a lot of effort and money. Women have been struggling to maintain their rights and liberties during these years and not to lose their relative freedom. Unfortunately, we do not see a happy future for women and the country of Afghanistan.

***ASA: Do you think the Taliban should be fought or should civil activists seek to reform them?***

I am a moderate, both in my personal life and in my work. Our concern is not the Taliban who speak at the negotiating table with domestic and foreign observers, but the Taliban who are on the battlefield and resort to violence. These are different. Naturally, just as people are tired of war, we are tired of hearing and seeing scenes of violence and crime. We want a peaceful atmosphere in which the rights for which women have made such sacrifices are preserved, and women keep their basic rights as citizens after peace. I would be satisfied with a situation where there is no war and we can talk to the Taliban in peace in a war-free atmosphere and have a government together, but I find this unlikely for the Taliban.

One of the reasons the Taliban are showing flexibility today is because they have accepted that after two decades negotiations are overdue. Today, women have entered the cultural,

economic and political arenas, and naturally the Taliban cannot ignore them one hundred percent. Otherwise, no one will go to the negotiating table with them. Their ideology will be determined in the future. It takes a long time from words to deeds.

***ASA: How do you see the situation of Afghan music after the peace? Can women artists continue their activities?***

In essence, ideology is important, and it does not matter at all whether the Taliban are familiar with the internet or not. I should not have to point out that many people can co-exist with this kind of extremist thinking in European countries. It is true that the Taliban have access to social media and see the world around them, but the bottom line is that they do not accept the world around them and cover up the changes.

In my opinion, the Taliban's minimum flexibility will be for women to study and work in special conditions, and Afghan music, like other countries in the region, will continue to operate abroad. The point is not that we have a problem with the Taliban, but I do not think that the Taliban will allow singing to take place in the country. I know many singers from the region who are not allowed to perform in their own country. Our artists will probably be forced to move abroad as well, and people inside the country will be forced to follow Afghan music through social media.

***ASA: How has your music developed since fleeing Afghanistan?***

I try to do what I can do, the best I can do. After migrating to Europe, my artwork became more colourful. Because of the freedom and security that prevails in Europe, my musical art has come to the fore. I take music seriously and I do not have a business view of music. I participate in festivals and concerts in foreign countries and I have had many performances to raise funds for the people of Afghanistan.

I and most of the Afghan academic artists have not learned this art. I work as a professional amateur. I know many in world music who do not have an academic background but work as professional amateurs. Music is centrally important to me. I try to produce songs that are artistically valuable so that I and others can enjoy it. It is better for others to review my music and history will judge.

***ASA: Why don't we have singers of lasting fame, like in the past?***

Existing conditions have affected artists. We are dealing with chaotic conditions in Afghanistan, and this is the opposite of other countries. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, in addition to the security problems, daily life and events that are going on in Afghanistan, it also has a negative impact on the psyche of artists. As a result, young artists become famous like a wave and then fade away. We have not yet been able to have a stable

atmosphere in Afghanistan. The waves pound the fortunes of the artists from one side to the other. After a while, the young artist has to support himself financially by taking extra work. Music in Afghanistan, unlike in other countries, cannot itself fund an artist.

One of the reasons is that in Afghanistan music is not promoted academically. Also, male and female singers who raise their voices in traditional society face massive psychological pressure from people to give up music.

***ASA: How do you see the music of Afghanistan today?***

Afghan music has its place and history. Unfortunately, it has suffered in recent decades and has not progressed as much as it deserves in the world of music. The current state of music is also valuable. I hope it gets better in the future.

There is no critical discussion of music. We have seen artists like Ahmed Zahir in the past, but we cannot and should not stay at the same level. Music should also improve, but a country at war should not expect miracles from musicians. We are talking about a country where women were once not allowed to raise their voices. We cannot say that our music was good in the past and not today. We must also support today's singers .

Undoubtedly, they want to become global.

***ASA: How should Afghan music develop in the future? What is the opinion of foreigners about the music of Afghanistan today?***

In essence, the music itself is complete. However, we need modernity and the space where it should be in our music is empty. Although we have artists inside and outside the country who have tried to make progress in music and work for innovation, they are not well received and the Afghan people are not very keen on innovating in music. This makes artists a little one-dimensional.

Afghan music is, though, loved by foreigners. Music has no borders. We cannot make music that is truly unique. Every country and every region has its own indigenous music, that is for sure. However, in terms of music science, all music is related and foreigners can appreciate our music.

*This interview first appeared on [Maqshosh](#).*

*Ahmad Soheil Ahmadi is an editor at [Maqshosh](#).*

CounterPunch 05.05.2021