

Interview with Dariush Eghbali  
Gulan Magazine



1. How would you describe the evolution of Dariush from yesterday to now, and what has been the reason for the enduring relationship between you and three generations of your fans?

From the beginning, I believed in a set of principles based upon a non ideological, non cultural, non political, non religious perspectives. I believe that no particular ideology should be allowed to create animosity and division among human beings, and I believe that no

power is capable to empower us like the power of love. Art belongs to the mass and I belong to one party, the party of the people. Education and clarity of the heart and soul are my motto, and I strongly believe that so long as the truth is not free, freedom will not become reality. In an environment where there is not only a fear of speaking the truth, but it is also more petrifying to hear the truth, songs and music can play a very powerful, influential and constructive role in tumbling the walls of denial and fear.

I began my journey from the world of art and today this journey has evolved and flourished with my establishing Ayeneh Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to being the messenger of hope, education, awareness and freedom. I chose to coordinate my social activities in a complementary fashion to my artistic activities so as to be better able to address the needs of my countrymen.

I have tried to create a mélange of styles and avenues through music, videos and documentaries to reflect the realities of our world, to present a clearer picture of life's realities to my people. I believe that nothing empowers people more than awareness and education. In the past 8 years, since the inception of Ayeneh, all of my efforts have been directed towards providing education and preventative measures to my countrymen in such areas as human rights violations, the disease of addiction and AIDS, the plight of street children, as well as the devastating state of the refugees worldwide. I have tried to use audio visual means to instill preventative measures deeper and further, either thru our weekly educational television programs, or our free seminars worldwide, as well as our educational websites. I believe that the solution has to come from within, and the ever expanding chain of all our friends in recovery worldwide who volunteer their time and energy to open the doors of recovery to all those who are still suffering from the disease of addiction has proven time and again that there is always a way out, only if you believe in your self and your own abilities and chose to learn from other people's experience.

They say that art is the ladder to the top of the mountain of truth, so long as that ladder is supported by faith. Having faith in the power of love, having faith in the legitimacy of the people, having faith in our own power, having faith that we can either find a way or build a way

have empowered me to get more determined in my path using any and all my abilities.

I have passionately tried to be the voice of all of the amazingly strong and dedicated young generation in my country who has been tortured, abused, imprisoned and pummeled. Our history is the greatest testimony of the fact that power hungry forces may have been able to delay how quickly our countrymen could reach their goal, but in the long run, they have never been able to stop them.

**2. The Kurdish people are very big fans of yours, how come you did not address their plight or sang a song for them at the time of the bombing and mass murder in Halabcheh?**

How unfortunate that you may not have heard me, how regrettable that my social and artistic activities of the past decades have been hidden from you. As a reminder, in the music video that I produced for my song entitled “fajee” I dedicated my song’s message to the Kurdish people by using images of the genocide in Halabja.

Furthermore, an article was written in wall Street Journal on my dedication to the plight of the Kurdish people of yet another of my music videos, created for the song entitled “Ba man Az Iran Begu” .

There is no doubt that we have all been witnessed to the plight and suffering of the brave people of Kurdistan, and no one can deny the tragedies you have endured.

Let us not forget that art, just like science and wisdom, has no boundaries, and is indeed one of most fundamental avenues of communication so long as it has direction and is goal oriented. My goal has always been to depict the realities, the pain, the cries of all those who have been subjected to tyranny and injustice, those who have withstood the oppressive dictatorships and fought endlessly for their legitimate right to life. I believe that art with a direction, with a goal, with a purpose can empower worldwide movements, it can reflect the plight of all the oppressed and it can vitalize the freedom movement’s energy. Each and every one of us can play a very important role in supporting our countrymen’s quest and plea in our own way, within

the realm of our own abilities, so as to complement each other's capabilities and reach that grand goal.



**3. What has been the stimulus or reason which has rendered your art not only as a weapon but also as a healing force?**

My repertoire is a mélange of my goals and passions. A song or a melody has to touch me and has to embody a message. Each and every one of my songs is a reflection of my vision, passion, personality and my goals and objectives, and I have been true to this path for the past forty years as I believe in art with a purpose. The messages have been real and the words enduring. Each and every one of the songs has been instilled in my memory and is part of my life. Singing has never been a hobby for me; it has been as meaningful as living and breathing. It has been a gift that has held a very grand and precious place in my

heart, for which I have a great deal of respect, and to which I feel indebted. Everyone is affected by the ups and downs of life one way or the other. I, as well as most, have had a rough childhood, my life's hardships and struggles have certainly affected the feel of my style of performance. My compass has always been my goals and passions, in my social activism as well as my artistic career. Since I believe that music and lyrics are as soul food, I have always tried to create an opportunity for all my endeavors to echo the plight of my countrymen, and to reflect the bitter sweet realities of my country, an avenue of communication which may indeed be more telling than words. I strongly believe that I should use this opportunity and this gift and ability in a very constructive manner as I strongly believe that the wounds of the society are ours to mend.

#### **4. How do you feel about the Kurdish language and culture and how close do you think Kurdish and Iranian music is?**

The Kurdish language is one of the oldest branches of Ancient Iranian dialects and I have always loved the Kurdish language as one of our native languages. I have beautiful memories of the two years I live in Sanandaj, where I had the great opportunity to get to know your culture, which deepened my great sentiments towards the Kurdish people.

The Kurdish music is one of the most enriched and fruitful music of native Iranian music, and music plays a very important role in the lives of the Kurdish people. Kurdish music, due to the history of Kurdistan has an epic feel, and has always echoed the plight of the Kurdish people and their historic and heroic events.

The long years of the struggles of Kurdish people are forever instilled in the pages of history, as well as their freedom loving character. Taq-e-bostan and the Bistoon inscriptions among others are precious and priceless mementos that not only will never be forgotten, but have indeed strengthened our historical ties. From an artistic point of view, I believe that art should celebrate and revere the bravery and



selflessness of all ethnicities and races and is not in reality specific to one particular group or race, art has no boundaries and limitations and belongs to the entire human race.

**5. The Kurdish people would like you to sing a song in Kurdish with regards to their plights and their struggles; would you be interested in such a project?**

I have always strived for a closer relationship with all Iranian ethnic groups; I hope that such an opportunity arises very soon. It is an undeniable fact that the Kurds , like other Iranian ethnicities and all freedom loving Iranians , have tremendously suffered devastating losses in their fight against dictatorships , and we all share this plight and we all echo this pain. In fact, the cries of all our countrymen is an assimilation of the all our voices and demands for freedom, from the Kurds, to the Baluchis to the Turks and Turkmen, etc. Demands, protests and cries that have been suppressed for years by oppressors of freedom. I have always tried to echo these voices and protests.

I have always believed in team work and have always invited my colleagues in the world of arts and humanity to join me in echoing the message of freedom and peace. I hope that in the near future Kurdish lyricists, poets, musicians and songwriters will welcome this invitation.



6. Is it true that you have performed a song in Arabic?

No.

7. We are well aware of your meticulous and value your picks in lyrics, who have a special place in your picks?

The message, the core and the depth of the lyrics are always priority. A song can be a reflection of the characteristics, emotions and hopes of a silent nation. It has been shown time and again that the significance and the role of a song can be quite poignant and moving. A song can be the expression of the wants and desires of a nation, and it can play a very important part in awakening and stimulating the vision and sentiments of the society. If it arises from your soul, it will touch other

souls. A song is remembered much easier in your mind, and the echo of music transcends all barriers and boundaries. A song can be a calling, a cry, a protest, a message, a messenger or a story, a thought process or more importantly a stimulus.

I have always tried to use the songs that have a message, either a historical message or songs that depict the predicaments of our times. From the philosophical and spiritual poems of Molana, to the treasures of Hafez, who always wrote of loving souls who thrive for freedom. My repertoire also embodies lyrics by Ahmad Shamloo, Touraj Negahban, Ardalan Sarfaraz, Iraj Janati Attaei and Shahyar Ghanbari among others whose lyrics have enriched my goal. I also look into choosing lyrics which may enrich the soul and awaken our motivation to energize our senses and our inner powers to help our world evolve into a better world.

## **8. How do you assess the current trends in the music world?**

Today's young generation has a different relationship with music. This generation has its own particular feel, creativity and innovation. As you can see, the horizon of music expands from the tribal music to Pop, and from the traditional music to Rap, and each and every one of them has held its grounds in the society.

The world of music is evolving as we speak, and music in our land is also going through its own evolution, obviously being influenced by the current state of affairs. One of the most apparent characteristics that are noted worldwide is the gradual fading of the cultural and artistic boundaries, in which the world of internet has played a very important role. Obviously, part of the trend in music today has been a reflection of the state of censorship and the cultural and political limitations and restrictions instituted by the government in Iran. The underground music has played a major role in fighting this censorship trend to silence the echoes of the defiance and protest of the younger generation. The power of the cutting edge language of a song is undeniable in our country and it has always been subjected to



aggression, suppression and censorship. I truly believe that the language of a song is more powerful than any weapon.

**9. You have performed in Dubai; will you be performing in Kurdistan in the near future?**

I will embrace such an opportunity.



**10. Your song entitled “Shatranj” has been strongly revered, please tell us a bit more about this project?**

I chose this song to depict the utmost importance of learning from our history as well as depicting the individual and collective power of my countrymen. A history filled with tireless and united pursuits and struggles of my countrymen, of all socio-political and religious backgrounds, for freedom and independence. The quest of all those who defied fear and hopelessness, who defied the guns and batons, and fought for their rights, for their hopes and dreams. We cannot allow any weapon to annihilate our historical memory.

My message and my goal in performing “Shatranj” was to echo the message of Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell’s manifesto, in an audio visual format, to depict those power hungry and tyrannical

leaders of the world who have closed their eyes and minds to humanity and move on with their incessant violations of human rights worldwide. I am pleased that the Kurdish people have embraced this song.

**11. What is your message for the people of the Middle East and your special message for the Kurdish people?**

The freedom movement of our people and the Kurdish people will move ahead. I have always been in search of the answer to the ever present dilemma as to why we have not been able to cross the bridge to freedom. I believe that we may be able to find the answer in our cultural issues and problems. We need to take a moment and re evaluate not only ourselves, but also need to look for cultural healing. We need a national truce and national acceptance, as well as tolerance and understanding. This is the only way we can enrich and empower our collective abilities, that is the only way we can reach our grand goal and achieve that freedom we have fought for and have been in search of for centuries.

I have always pointed to the fact that the growth of the social maladies worldwide parallels and is directly related to the growth of human rights violations. Wherever human values and rights are dishonored and desecrated, the social maladies have destroyed the roots of humanity. I strongly believe that the cooperation of all humanitarian organizations, and their collaboration can and will play a very important and constructive role in the healing process of all societies. We have to find avenues and solutions to be able to get closer to each other so that we can achieve bigger goals. Without any consistency and without a complementary action, as it is quite apparent, nothing can be accomplished in even controlling the growth of social maladies.

Let us take a quick look back at history and what has transpired, not only from the point of view of what has happened to us, but from the point of view of how we have reacted towards the tyranny, the violations of our human rights and the suppression. Let us first admit to our faults and shortcomings so that we can prevent them from ever

happening again, and subsequently, move on in a collective, harmonious and united manner towards our quest to obtain our freedom, away from hate and prejudice, all along respecting any and all ideologies and socio-political, cultural and religious backgrounds. Freedom is not our demand, it is our right.

Let us accept the fact that if we are claiming that we are here to serve humanity, either as a journalist or a media owner who respects the integrity of that trade, or as a humanitarian who has created an organization to serve the society in need, that in order to reach this sacred goal, they have to avoid certain traits. Such traits as selfishness, being power hungry, being irresponsible, being an opportunist, lawlessness, self censorship and denial.

At a time when young and old, men and women are denied of the most basics of human needs, social security and freedom, at a time when our younger generation is paying for freedom and change with their own blood, at a time when people are denied their right of speech and religion, we have to go beyond the superficial differences and destructive prejudices, and with a strong dedication to each other and to our human rights, and a stronger dedication to respecting each other in this quest, fight united for what is dear and sacred to all humanity.

Wishing for the freedom of our country Iran and the success of the brave people of Kurdistan.

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