

Development of hafez modirzadeh's music



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Hafez Modirzadeh is an American jazz saxophonist and composer. The father was from Iran, hence Modirzadeh came up with the intricacies of Persian “*radif*”, which is the classical music of the Iranian people. The combination of the “*radif*” mastery of the saxophone and all modern jazz styles, helped Modirzadeh create a certain philosophical and theoretical approach when he is playing what he terms as a “*Chromodal Discourse*”. Modirzadeh was initially concerned with the utilization of intricacies with an intonation that is in the Middle East within the modern jazz setting, although this swiftly changed to a better universal approach. The flexibility and the comfort paired with the tuning of both the Eastern and the western systems have enabled Modirzadeh engage in a variety of dialogues with different musicians.

While he is not directly influenced by Ornette Coleman, Modirzadeh notes that Coleman did experiment with concepts he is currently experimenting with. It was in the way he played with the intonation, notably influenced by the note bending abilities of Delta blues musicians, and provide a parallel to the *radif* work by Modirzadeh.” *Segâh*” is a Persian musical mode featuring an interval of a Western third flattened by a quarter tone. The early blues and the different indigenous music from Indonesia, Africa and all over the world. This *segâh* interval is a symmetrical division that provides a fifth or a “split-fifth” according to Modirzadeh. There are also split-fourths and split-thirds, hidden from our Western ears and eyes.

When listening to Modirzadeh's work, there is a lot of mystery and power provided in the symmetry which is as old as the pyramids, and the artist is able to level the playing field to our own worldly musical consciousness by providing the equilibrium of the Western 12-tone equal temperament. The idea is an example of a musician attempting to renew a lot of humanity in the art form, trying to bring in cultures and art in a system that balances them out in alternative forms of harmony and philosophy. In his recording, "Post-Chromodal Out!", these two concepts are evident to a radical extent. He features the trumpeter Amir ElSaffar and pianist Vijay Iyer, two musicians also part of the same "continuum," the compositions and improvisations on this recording truly transport the listener to a place where future and past seem to co-exist.

Over his past three albums on Pi Recordings, Modirzadeh has incorporated tunings from Iraqi maqam, Persian dastgah, and Iberian traditional musics. With collaborators like Amir El-Saffar, Vijay Iyer, and the string quartet ETHEL, these multi-modal musical explorations buzz with the excitement of limitless possibility. His recent project, The Pulsivity/Resonance Project is a collective set that the artist performed. Over the four sets, Modirzadeh plays different compositions for saxophone and was joined by different pianists, — Leo Genovese, Peter Apfelbaum, Diane Moser, and Tyshawn Sorey. Every pair played the same compositions and in turn all were based on a uniquely tempered eight note scale. These compositions took on different colors and shapes, spreading over to different dimensions.

Hafez Modirzadeh has managed to create a global experience with the " *In Convergence Liberation*" which looks to be an examination of the cross-

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cultural influences that explore the Post-Chromodal Out (PI Recordings, 2012). Previous recordings included the elements of the multi-regional modalisms and chromatics including the compositional techniques that are even more textural and offer a significantly deep line for the players. Modirzadeh plays fine reed instruments and a percussion, string quartet ETHEL, two vocalists and a fellow Middle Eastern jazz musician, trumpeter Amir ElSaffar, who joined the masters of Persian string and the percussion instruments that provide a form of complex and specific tapestry of sounds.

Modirzadeh has further extensively written the ethnomusicology which in particular is of the Iranian classical music as the option for the alternative musical development. As a result, there is a cerebral foundation to In Convergence Liberation. As a scholar and professor, Modirzadeh explores the theories of physical and spiritual balance using his music. The academic aspect of the principles he explores are not necessarily needful in appreciating the Modirzadeh compositions. It has proven to be an effective way of telling stories as a unit in the three suites and stand-alone pieces that make up the album.

In his composition, he uses prescribed structures, harmonic nuance and improvisation, all which add on to the essence of the music. "La Angustia de los Amantes" opens the album with the plaintive cry of Modirzadeh's tenor and Mili Berojo's emotional vocal in Spanish. Initially, the pace is slow and at the time the string quartet goes in, ElSaffar joins in with a form of spontaneity and an extending coordination of different counterpoints that turn into a part of the original theme. Contrasting with the Spanish influence

of the first piece, the three-song suite “ Karna Passages” is an amalgam of Persian and modern jazz elements augmented by regional and homemade instruments. Another suite, the six-part “ Sor Juana” combines features of both the Persian and Andalucian Spanish influences linked together by a feminist theme. Like many of the pieces on “ *In Convergence Liberation*” odd time signatures and shifting themes take on a life of their own.

“ *In Convergence Liberation* ”, this is an effort of the whole group, where the two main actors with their solos become part of a larger energetic field. Just like the title implies, the album presents an individual freedom that exists in any collective although further than that analysis type, it is an effective and lyrical presentation of ideas. As a composer, Modirzadeh’s approach seems like one that could be weighed down by ambition but instead, it is an inspired, thought provoking collection that is well worth experiencing.

Modirzadeh’s Discography for “ *In Convergence Liberation*”

Track Listing: La Angustia de los Amantes; Tetraspheres; Karna Passages; Las Orillas del Mar; Number That Moves; Suite Compost; Sor Juana.

Personnel: Hafez Modirzadeh: multiple reed instruments; Amir ElSaffar: trumpet, voice; Mili Bermejo: voice; Faraz Minooei: santur; Amir Abbas Etemadzadeh: percussion; ETHEL String Quartet: Mary Rowell: violin; Cornelius Dufallo: violin; Ralph Farris: viola; Dorothy Lawson: cello.

Title: In Convergence Liberation

Year Released: 2014

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Record Label: Pi Recordings

References

- Hafez Modirzadeh - In Convergence Liberation [New CD] • \$16. 19. (n. d.). Retrieved from <https://picclick.com/Hafez-Modirzadeh-In-Convergence-Liberation-New-CD-132561506766.html>