

IN MEMORIAM

Lloyd Clifton Miller, 1938–2024

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Lloyd Miller spent his life pursuing three musical forms that defined and drove his performance and intellectual life: jazz, classical Persian music, and Afghani traditional music, especially the musical forms of Herat. From his earliest years, even as a young pupil in his teens, he attempted to listen to, play, and compose jazz. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, he followed the life of an itinerant jazzman playing musical gigs in Parisian nightclubs, especially playing piano and other instruments with Jef Gilson and his jazz ensemble, with whom he made several recordings. He also followed a European musical circuit, playing in jazz clubs in France, Switzerland, Sweden, and other European countries with musicians such as Gilson and Henri Texier.

In 1963, he returned to the United States and attended Brigham Young University and earned a BA in Asian Studies. During this period, as he continued his studies for an MA degree in the same field, he continued to perform jazz. In 1967 he won the top prize in the Intercollegiate Jazz Festival, and in 1969 he won the composer's award in another intercollegiate contest.

Linguistically gifted, Miller learned Arabic and Persian, which he spoke fluently, as well as speaking several European languages. In the 1970s, he moved to Iran, where his parents had worked for many years, on a Fulbright fellowship. He traveled widely in Iran and Afghanistan and established himself as a musical critic on Iranian television under the name of Kurosh Ali Khan, as well writing numerous articles in the Persian print media, providing controversial critiques of musical performances at such venues as the Shiraz Arts Festival and the principal concert hall of Tehran, the Talar-e Farhang.

He lived in Iran for seven years, right up to the Islamic Revolution. During this period, he became a champion, devotee, and fierce defender of the musical performances, style, and theoretical perspectives of the well-known Persian classical music performer and theorist Dariush Safvat, the founding director of the Center for the Preservation and Research of Music, which emphasized a deep connection between Sufism, spirituality, and the playing of Persian classical music. Miller studied several Persian musical instruments such as the *santur* and the *ney* under Safvat. He held very strong views on maintaining purity in the performance of Persian classical music.

One of his cherished projects was to combine jazz with Persian classical music, with improvisation, which both musical genres feature. Miller used the modal scales (*radif*) of Persian music as a basis for his best known recording, *Oriental Jazz*. He released numerous recordings in this genre under his own label, East West Records. He continued to perform jazz, heading up two ensembles, one, the Roaring Twenties, playing Chicago-oriented jazz, and the other playing in the New Orleans style, the Salt City Saints. In addition, together with his wife Katherine St. John, he founded Eastern Arts, an organization that both performed and sponsored other performers of music and dance of the Middle East and Central Asia. He published two books: *Music and Song in Persia: The Art of Avaz* (University

of Utah Press, 1999), and, coauthored with Katherine St. John, *Afghan Music and Dance: Shared Arts of Persia's Past* (Mazda, 2013).

Miller passed away on December 27, 2024, at the age of 86. He is survived by his wife, Katherine St. John.