

FARHANG
FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025



FARHANG
FOUNDATION

is a nonreligious, nonpolitical, and nonprofit foundation dedicated to celebrating Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large.

Areas of Focus



Constituencies

Trustees, Council Members, Advisers & Supporters

Iranians, Iranophiles, and Iran Scholars who support the mission of Farhang Foundation and our programs by donating their time, knowledge, and financial support.

Iranian Americans

These are the custodians of one of the richest cultures in the world, who benefit from learning more about their art and culture. They are also the individuals who will later be our cultural ambassadors to the community at large.

Community at Large

We feel that Iranian art and culture can contribute positively and should be woven into the multicolored tapestry of great cultures that compose America. That's why our mission at Farhang Foundation is to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large.





Letter from the Chair: Farhang's 17th Year

Dorood! I step into the role of Chairman of the Farhang Foundation, with immense gratitude and admiration for all that has been accomplished under the leadership of **Dr. Haleh Emrani**. I'm privileged to continue her legacy, guiding Farhang Foundation, an organization that has become the beacon for celebrating Iranian art and culture worldwide. This year's accomplishments reflect the vibrancy, creativity, and unity that define our community, a community that honors its roots while looking confidently toward the future.

At the heart of Farhang Foundation lies a mission both simple and profound: to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large—which increasingly is the whole world. For many of us Iranians in diaspora, our wonderful Iranian culture enriches our lives and makes us better humans. I frequently say: "Iranian makes me a better American."

In 2024–25, Farhang's mission reached new heights. Across California, from Los Angeles to Orange County to the Bay Area, we witnessed the power of Iranian art, music, literature, and dialogue to connect people, spark understanding, and inspire pride in our shared heritage. In a world where politicians and media try to pigeonhole our great culture, Farhang Foundation presents an honest and needed reality check. Iranian art and culture are deep, powerful, and resonant, and it is our mission to make sure as many people as possible get to experience that which we love so much.

Expanding Our Reach: A New Era for Farhang

This past year marked a historic milestone for Farhang Foundation with our long-anticipated debut in Northern California. Our collaboration with the **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)** in San Francisco introduced Farhang's programming to an entirely new audience through two remarkable solo exhibitions: **Nicky Nodjoumi: The Personal Is Political** and **Nahid Hagigat: Etched in Time**. These exhibitions explored the intersection of identity, politics, and creativity, engaging thousands of visitors and drawing widespread acclaim.



Complementing these exhibitions, Farhang hosted a series of public talks and panels, including **Art of Resistance**, featuring Iranian artists Dr. Shiva Ahmadi, Ala Ebtekar, Taraneh Hemami, and Dr. Talinn Grigor. The sold-out discussion exemplified the ways in which Iranian artists continue to use their craft to engage with social change and cultural dialogue. A follow-up conversation between renowned painter Nicky Nodjoumi and scholar Dr. Layla S. Diba became one of our most-watched **Farhang Connect** programs, reaching more than 118,000 viewers worldwide.

To celebrate the exhibitions, Farhang and YBCA copresented the debut Bay Area concert of the **Siriya Ensemble** and **Sheenubb**, following their acclaimed US premiere at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Beverly Hills. This concert, performed to a sold-out audience, marked Farhang's first live performance event in San Francisco and signaled our ongoing commitment to expanding Farhang's mission beyond Southern California. Special recognition is owed to Nazila Habibizad and the Bay Area Council for their inspired leadership in this new expansion to the Bay Area.



Celebrating Nowruz: A Season of Renewal

At the core of our cultural calendar stands Nowruz, a celebration of rebirth, beauty, and unity. On March 9, 2025, Farhang Foundation proudly hosted its **15th Annual Nowruz Celebration at UCLA**, the largest Nowruz gathering in the United States. More than **thirty thousand visitors** filled Dickson Court Park for a day of live music, traditional dance, storytelling, and children's activities, crowned by our magnificent grand Haft-Sin display and a free outdoor concert by the one and only **Kamyar**.



That evening, the festivities continued with our **Nowruz Concert at Royce Hall**, copresented with **UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music**. Conducted by **Dr. Shahab Paranj** and featuring the **Iranshahr Orchestra**, the concert showcased

the incomparable **Mahdieh Mohammadkhani** in her first Southern California appearance in over a decade, alongside the Los Angeles debut of opera sensation **Cameron Shahbazi**. This spectacular event was broadcast by **Iran International TV** to more than forty million viewers worldwide, a profound moment of pride and unity for Iranians everywhere.



In the days following, Farhang extended the Nowruz spirit to the broader community through our **Grand Haft-Sin installation at Westfield Century City**, accompanied for the first time by a full day of live music and dance. We then concluded the Nowruz season with our annual **Pacific Symphony collaboration at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Orange County**. The sold-out concert, **Return of the Masters**, featured the legendary **Pournazeri Trio: Kaykhosro, Tahmoures, and Sohrab**, joined by **Sahar Boroujerdi, Donya Kamali, and Tina Jamegarmi**. Under the direction of Maestro **Carl St.Clair**, the evening embodied Farhang's mission of celebrating Iranian heritage through world-class artistry.



Online, Farhang's global reach continued to grow. New episodes of **Farhang Performances** and **Farhang Flavor** brought Iranian music and cuisine to audiences in more than thirty countries, with highlights including **Gordafarid's Atash-e Nowruz**, the children's program **Parvaz Keykavos**, and Yazdi chef **Elaheh Mirafzali's** beloved recipe for **Qottab Yazdi**.

A Year of Film, Theater, and the Performing Arts

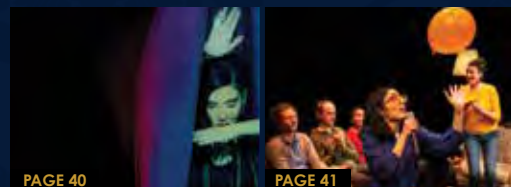
Farhang Foundation continued to champion Iranian cinema, sponsoring all Iranian films in competition at **AFI FEST**, America's largest film festival. These screenings included the highly anticipated ***The Seed of the Sacred Fig*** by **Mohammad Rasoulof**, ***My Favourite Cake*** by **Maryam Moghadam** and ***Behtash Sanaeiha***, and ***Universal Language*** by **Matthew Rankin**. The festival's enthusiastic audiences reaffirmed the growing global recognition of Iranian filmmakers and Farhang's pivotal role in elevating their voices on international stages.



PAGE 34

Our longstanding partnership with the **UCLA Film and Television Archive** also flourished through the **Celebration of Iranian Cinema**, presenting a diverse range of films and the historic restoration of ***The Sealed Soil*** by pioneering director **Marva Nabili**. This remarkable rediscovery, the first Iranian feature film directed by a woman, stood as a tribute to Iranian cinema's enduring legacy.

In the performing arts, Farhang's collaboration with the **Center for the Art of Performance UCLA (CAP UCLA)** brought two powerful theatrical productions to Westwood's Nimoy Theater. **Tara Ahmadinejad's *Disclaimer*** offered a witty exploration of communication and identity, while **Sussan Deyhim's *Whispers from the Underworld*** captivated audiences with its transcendent blend of music, dance, and visual storytelling.



PAGE 40

PAGE 41

Meanwhile, our partnership with the **Alex Theatre Performing Arts Center** in Glendale reached a new high point with the **sold-out Pallet Concert** on April 27, 2024. This electrifying performance marked the beloved Iranian band's long-awaited return to Southern California after more than eight years and strengthened our commitment to engaging Eastside audiences and the vibrant Iranian Armenian community.



PAGE 18

Preserving Musical Heritage and Inspiring New Generations

Music has always been at the heart of Farhang Foundation's mission, and this year we continued to nurture both established and emerging talent. Our collaboration with **Maestro Shardad Rohani** and the newly founded **Roudaki Orchestra** brought historic concerts to both **UCLA's Schoenberg Hall** and **UCI's Irvine Barclay Theatre**. The performances, part of the orchestra's inaugural season, featured new compositions blending classical orchestration with Iranian melodies, redefining the boundaries of Iranian symphonic music.



PAGES 22, 48

Equally inspiring was the **Annual Music of Iran Concert** at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music, organized by the Iranian Music Program, a program made possible through Farhang's support. This event provides students of diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to study and perform traditional Iranian repertoire under the mentorship of world-class musicians. Watching

these young artists carry forward our musical heritage reminds us that Farhang's investment in education is an investment in the future.

Literature, Learning, and Thought Leadership

Farhang's dedication to scholarship and storytelling continued through the **Farhang Literature** series, which launched with ***Martyr!*** by **Kaveh Akbar** in conversation with **Abdi Nazemian**, followed by ***The Lion Women of Tehran*** by **Marjan Kamali**. These deeply engaging discussions attracted tens of thousands of viewers and positioned the program as a cornerstone of our digital offerings.

Our **USC Distinguished Lecture Series** welcomed **Dr. Pamela Karimi** for an inspiring talk on ***Survival by Design: Desert Architecture at the End of the World***, exploring sustainability and cultural resilience. At **UC Santa Barbara**, the annual **Iranian Studies Lecture Series** featured **Dr. Ali Mirsepassi** and **Dr. Soraya Tremayne**, both offering timely analyses of Iranian social and cultural identity.

Traditions Celebrated: The 12th Annual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda

Before the arrival of the New Year, Farhang closed 2024 with one of its most cherished traditions, the **12th Annual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda**. Hosted for the first time at the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** in Beverly Hills, this sold-out event celebrated the longest night of the year through poetry, music, and storytelling. The evening featured Iran's pioneering female **Naqqal**, **Gordafarid**, alongside the **Siriya Ensemble** and **Sheenubb** in their unforgettable US debut performance. With its fusion of southern rhythms and classical narration, the night captured the very essence of Iranian artistry and community spirit.



PAGE 42

Building Bridges Through Community and Culture

From the **Festival Beverly Hills to Iran Through Books** at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books, Farhang continued to foster community engagement and cross-cultural understanding. Tens of thousands of visitors encountered Iranian art and culture through music, dance, literature, and cuisine.



PAGE 14

PAGE 24

Through these initiatives, Farhang remains not only a presenter of art but a bridge between generations and communities, inspiring a deeper appreciation of the values that unite us all.

Looking Ahead

As I reflect on this remarkable year, I am profoundly moved by the dedication of our **Board of Trustees**, **Council Members**, **Executive Team**, and **volunteers**, as well as the unwavering support of our **donors** and **partners**. Together, we have strengthened Farhang's reputation as one of the most respected Iranian cultural organizations in the world.

As we look to the future, my vision is to expand upon this extraordinary foundation, to deepen our collaborations with world-class institutions, to amplify Iranian voices across digital platforms, and to engage younger generations in sustaining our cultural legacy.

The story of Farhang Foundation is, at its heart, the story of a community of people coming together in love, creativity, and pride for our shared heritage. Together, we will continue to build bridges through art, elevate the voices of Iranian creators, and share the beauty of our culture with the world.

Ba Sepas,



Chair, Farhang Foundation



SONG OF THE NORTH

LOS ANGELES PREMIERE



From April 5 to 7, 2024, the **Freud Playhouse** at **UCLA** hosted the Los Angeles premiere of **SONG OF THE NORTH**, a cinematic shadow theater experience conceived, designed, and directed by **Hamid Rahmanian**. This multidisciplinary performance brought to life the ancient Iranian epic, the *Shahnameh*, through the use of over 480 handmade puppets, projected animation, music, movement, and theater. The production featured an original score by **Loga Ramin Torkian**, with vocals by **Azam Ali**, and included ensemble members **Ray Dondero**, **Sam Jay Gold**, **Harrison Greene**, **J Hann**, **Esme Roszel**, **Mo Talani**, **Sarah Walsh**, **Clay Westman**, and **Christopher Williams**. Described by *Le Monde* as bursting with "breathtaking fireworks of creativity," the show celebrated culture, collaboration, and the enduring power of storytelling.



ART IRAN ایران

In April 2024 Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with **Craft Contemporary** in Los Angeles, presented a series of unique cultural programs that engaged audiences through sound, art, music, and hands-on creativity. These programs were all presented as part of the **ART IRAN** exhibition, which launched at Craft Contemporary in January 2023 and ran through May 2024.

On April 13 the journey began with a Sound Healing Experience with **Roxie Sarhangi**, a seventy-five-minute immersive sound bath featuring the resonant tones of seven crystal bowls, a symphonic gong, an ocean drum, kochi chimes, and more, woven together with the wisdom of Rumi. Guided by Los Angeles-based artist and sound healing practitioner Roxie Sarhangi, participants were invited to bring yoga mats, pillows, and blankets to fully embrace this meditative and restorative session.

On April 21 the Foundation hosted a multifaceted cultural event that began with an insightful curator walk-through by **Roshanak Ghezelbash**, offering deeper understanding of the exhibited works. The program continued with the **CHAHAR BAGH** musical performance, inspired by the traditional Iranian "Four Gardens" design symbolizing harmony and balance. The ensemble featured vocalist **Maliheh Moradi**, composer and santoor player **Ehsan Matoori**, sitarist **Rajib Karmakar**, and percussionist **Greg Ellis**, captivating the audience with compositions by Matoori and Karmakar.

The series concluded on April 25 with **CERAMIC POMEGRANATES: A WORKSHOP WITH POT STUDIO**, a hands-on experience inspired by ART IRAN. Participants of all skill levels explored the art of hand-building and shaping clay into pomegranates, learning surface and underglaze decoration techniques along the way. Materials and tools were provided, ensuring an accessible and creative session for both beginners and experienced enthusiasts alike.

Together, these three programs highlighted Farhang Foundation's commitment to presenting immersive, multidisciplinary cultural experiences that connect Iranian art, music, and tradition with contemporary audiences.

Craft Contemporary



Rashin Kheiriyeh

Author Event at the Newport Beach Public Library

The **Newport Beach Public Library** celebrated Poetry Month with acclaimed author and illustrator **Rashin Kheiriyeh**. Held at the Newport Beach Public Library, the event featured a reading of her new children's book, **RUMI**, followed by an illustration demonstration and book signing. Kheiriyeh, a multi-award-winning artist with over ninety children's books published in more than twelve countries, has been nominated for the 2023 and

2024 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. The event was free and open to children of all ages.





IRAN

THROUGH BOOKS

Los Angeles Times FESTIVAL OF BOOKS AT USC



Farhang Foundation proudly presented the annual **IRAN THROUGH BOOKS** at the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books**, held at the **University of Southern California**. The foundation showcased the rich literary heritage of Iran, featuring personal appearances by esteemed authors such as **Rashin Kheiriyeh**, a multi-award-winning author-illustrator nominated for the 2023 and 2024 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award; **Firooz Zahedi**, a renowned photographer with a prolific career spanning portrait and advertising photography; **Josiane Cohan**, a scholar dedicated to translating and sharing the timeless wisdom of Ferdowsi's works, and **Omid Arabian**, children's book author inspired by the mystical poetry of Rumi. This free event attracted more than seventy-five thousand visitors, offering attendees an immersive experience into Iranian literature and culture.





The Boston Court Pasadena Performing Arts Center presented the world premiere of **A GOING AWAY PARTY PLAY**, written by **Keyanna Khatiblou** and directed by **James Fowler**. The narrative centered on Mina, who hosts a party for her closest friends

A GOING AWAY PARTY PLAY

and the audience. Throughout the gathering, the group engages in games, reflects on the contemporary American sociopolitical landscape, and uncovers the love story of Mina's parents during their escape from the Iranian Revolution. The play celebrated multicultural identities and delved into themes of leaving or losing one's homeland. The cast included **Mehrnaz Mohammadi** as Mina/Niloofer, **Kodi Jackman** as Kate/Caroline, **Nathan Mohebbi** as Ryan/Basir, **Giovanny Camarena** as Mateo/Security Officer, and **Cindy Nguyen** as Debbie/Maman Bozorg. This production underscored Farhang Foundation's commitment to promoting Iranian culture and fostering cross-cultural understanding through the performing arts and a proud new partnership with one of the premiere theater companies of Southern California.

BC BOSTON COURT PASADENA



UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

THE LEGACY OF THE SHIRAZ ART FESTIVAL

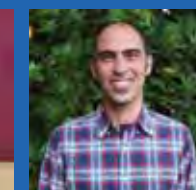
UCLA IRANIAN MUSIC LECTURE SERIES



Dr. Shahab Paranj

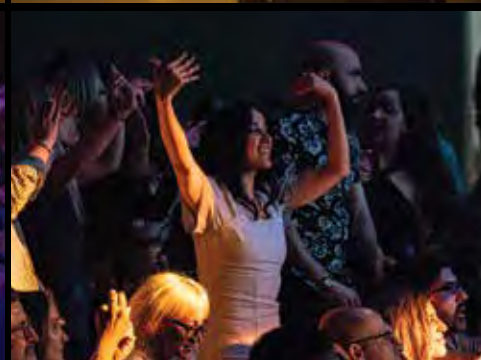


Dr. Vali Mahlouji



Dr. Josh Charney

UCLA's Iranian Music Conference Series presented **THE LEGACY OF THE SHIRAZ ART FESTIVAL**, an online panel discussion exploring the historical significance and enduring impact of the Shiraz Festival of Arts. Held annually from 1967 to 1977 in Shiraz and Persepolis, Iran, the festival was initiated by Empress Farah Pahlavi to foster cultural exchange between Eastern and Western arts. The panel featured **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, director of UCLA's Iranian Music program, conductor, and educator, known for integrating Iranian and Western composition techniques; **Dr. Vali Mahlouji**, art curator and founder of the nonprofit platform Archaeology of the Final Decade (AOTFD), who has contributed to institutions like the Guggenheim Museum and LACMA; and **Dr. Josh Charney**, musicologist, pianist, and composer, whose research focuses on the Shiraz Arts Festival as a cultural model for democracy and identity in prerevolutionary Iran. This insightful discussion shed light on the festival's role in bridging cultural divides and its lasting influence on the global arts landscape.



THE ALEX THEATRE PALLETT

In collaboration with the **Alex Theatre Performing Arts Center** of Glendale, Farhang Foundation proudly presented **PALLET—DREAM AWAY WITH ME**. After an eight-year hiatus from Los Angeles, the acclaimed Iranian band Pallett returned to captivate audiences with performances from their latest album, **NESF OL NAHAR MABDA** (Prime Meridian), alongside their most popular hits. Recognized as pioneers in the Iranian alternative fusion music genre, Pallett seamlessly blends classical,

traditional, jazz, rock, gypsy, and Iranian folk influences, integrating Iranian and Eastern scales into Western instruments. Their authentic sound and innovative compositions garnered them massive audiences both domestically and internationally, with sold-out shows across Europe, Australia, the US, and Brazil. This concert marked a significant moment in Southern California's cultural scene, celebrating Pallett's unique contribution to the global music landscape with a sold-out performance.





UCLA Celebration of **IRANIAN CINEMA**

UCLA
FILM &
TELEVISION
ARCHIVE



From June 14 to June 30, 2024, Farhang Foundation, in partnership with the **UCLA Film & Television Archive**, proudly presented the annual **UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema** at the **Billy Wilder Theater** in Los Angeles's **Hammer Museum**. This esteemed series showcased a diverse selection of feature-length and short films from Iran and the Iranian diaspora, celebrating the resilience, creativity, and artistic vision of Iranian filmmakers.

The program opened with the Los Angeles premiere of **JOONAM**, directed by **Sierra Urich**, a poignant documentary exploring identity and heritage through three generations of Iranian women living in the diaspora. The festival also included the world restoration premiere of **THE SEALED SOIL** (1977), directed by **Marva Nabili**, a landmark work as the first feature film directed by an Iranian woman.

Other screenings featured **CAUSE OF DEATH: UNKNOWN**, directed by **Maryam Zaree**, an investigative documentary examining global pharmaceutical practices; **ROXANA**, directed by **Parviz Shahbazi**, which portrays young Iranians navigating societal challenges; and **EMPTY NETS** (2023), directed by **Behrooz Karamizade**, a compelling story of love and sacrifice set against the backdrop of economic hardship.

The lineup also included **ACHILLES**, directed by **Farnoosh Samadi**, a powerful narrative addressing social dilemmas; **DARK MATTER**, directed by **Kiarash Anvari**, exploring themes of existentialism and displacement; and **IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS**, directed by **Arash Nassiri**, a surrealistic depiction of familial bonds and nostalgia.

Through these screenings, the festival offered audiences an unparalleled glimpse into the multifaceted world of Iranian cinema, underscoring Farhang Foundation's dedication to promoting Iranian art and culture.





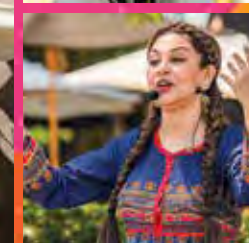
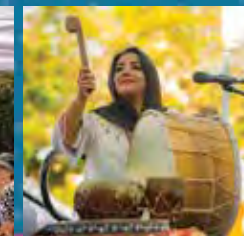
Maestro Shardad Rohani's **ROUDAKI** ORCHESTRA *The Inaugural Concert*

Farhang Foundation was proud to present the inaugural concert by the newly established **Roudaki Orchestra** at **UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music** under the direction of **Maestro Shardad Rohani**. The orchestra, comprising forty exceptional musicians and featuring the **AVA Choir**, delivered a captivating sold-out performance. The evening featured acclaimed violin soloist **Cyrus Forough**, who brought his renowned "fiery intensity" and "poetic vision" to the stage. Named in honor of the esteemed ninth-century Iranian poet and musician Roudaki, the orchestra is dedicated to celebrating Iran's rich musical heritage by performing works from both classical and contemporary Iranian composers. This inaugural concert marked a significant milestone in Southern California's cultural landscape, offering audiences a profound connection to Iran's artistic traditions.



Farhang Foundation was proud to join forces with the **City of Beverly Hills** in presenting a vibrant celebration of culture at the annual **FESTIVAL BEVERLY HILLS**. The foundation curated a lineup of Iranian music, children's programming, and cuisine at the largest free summer festival in Beverly Hills. Held at the iconic **Beverly Gardens Park**, the event was part of a broader cultural showcase featuring thirteen global traditions. The Iranian lineup included performances by the **Kooban Ensemble**, led by music director **Vandad Massahzadeh**, which featured folkloric music from many regions including Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Khorasan, Gilan, Shiraz, and Tehran. **Negar Estakhr** and **Maryam Rasekh** presented **Farhang Stories: Fantastic Fables**, a puppet show inspired by Iranian folklore, accompanied by puppet-making workshops for the younger visitors. Attendees also enjoyed gourmet Iranian cuisine by **Chef Mojdeh Eghbal's NOUSH**, offering an authentic culinary experience. This collaboration highlighted Farhang Foundation's commitment to celebrating Iranian culture and fostering cross-cultural understanding in Beverly Hills.

FESTIVAL BEVERLY HILLS





15th Annual FARHANG FOUNDATION SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Celebrating Iranian Heritage

FARHANG FOUNDATION SHORT FILM FESTIVAL AWARD CEREMONY

The 15th Annual Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival kicked off on April 29, inviting filmmakers worldwide to submit short films that explore aspects of Iranian culture and heritage. A record-breaking number of submissions were accepted until July 29, 2024, with entries evaluated for creativity, quality, and originality. The festival offered prizes of \$10,000 for first place, \$5,000 for second place, and \$3,000 for third place, along with global recognition through Farhang Foundation's promotional campaigns. The top six selections were announced in September 2024, culminating in an awards ceremony on September 28, 2024, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall. The esteemed 2024 jury included **Mark Amin, Lily Amir-Arjomand, Zar Amir, Ahmad Kiarostami, Noora Niasari, Niousha Noor, and Shabnam Tolouei**. The red-carpet award ceremony was hosted by comedian Melissa Shoshahi and featured special guest presenters including **Lily Amir-Arjomand**, the visionary founder of Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. The evening concluded with an after-party celebrating the filmmakers, featuring music by **DJ Arin**.





15th Annual
**FARHANG SHORT FILM
FOUNDATION FESTIVAL**
2024 WINNERS



THE ANNUAL MUSIC OF IRAN CONCERT AT UCLA

The **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** presented the Annual Music of Iran Concert at UCLA's **Schoenberg Hall**. This sold-out event showcased performances by students enrolled in the Iranian Music Degree program, collaborating with their instructors and esteemed professional musicians. Directed by **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, the newly formed Iranian Ensemble performed pieces by renowned Iranian classical composers from various eras, including Darvish Khan, Jalil Andalibi, Parviz Meshkatian, Bijan Kamkar, and Dr. Paranj himself. The ensemble featured musicians such as **Pejman Hadadi, Naghmeh Sarang, Daisy Faragher, Yaron Cherniak, Michael Abiteboul, Ezra Hapner, Shahab Paranj, and Sirvan Manhoobi**. This concert was part of the historic **Iranian Music Degree program at UCLA**, fully funded by Farhang Foundation, underscoring Farhang's commitment to promoting Iranian music and culture.

UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music





Nicky Nodjoumi

The Personal Is Political

Nahid Hagigat

Etched in Time at YBCA

Farhang Foundation proudly launched its inaugural exhibition in San Francisco in partnership with the **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)**, presenting two interconnected solo exhibitions: **NICKY NODJOUNI: THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL** and **NAHID HAGIGAT: ETCHED IN TIME**. Curated by **Amy Kisch**, these exhibitions offered an investigative portrait of a family of artists whose creative expressions are deeply intertwined with political revolution. Nodjoumi's surreal and kaleidoscopic paintings explore manifestations of political power, while Hagigat's evocative etchings focus on women and the ongoing struggle for freedom. The exhibitions were complemented by family photos and archival materials that shed light on the personal and shared struggles that have shaped their artistic practices. Additionally, a previously unexhibited 1972 animation by Nodjoumi was on display, addressing issues that continue to affect global communities today. The exhibition featured curated programming by Farhang Foundation throughout its five-month run from October 6, 2024, through March 23, 2025.



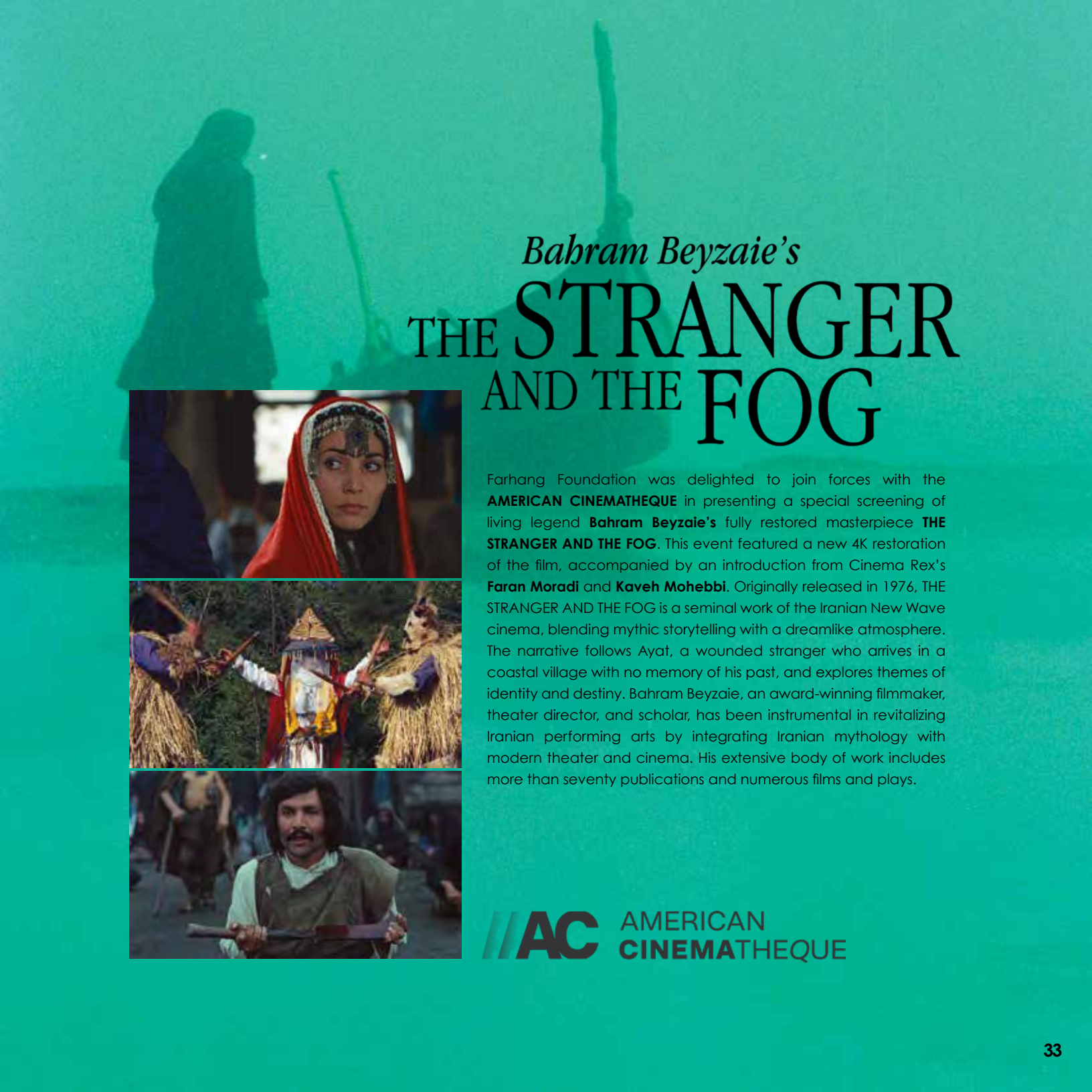
YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS



Credit: Architect and visionary Nader Khalili during his research odyssey amid Iran's desert architecture, c. 1977. Courtesy of the Cal Earth Institute.

SURVIVAL BY DESIGN: Desert Architecture at the End of the World

The **University of Southern California's Iranian Studies Initiative** continued the annual Farhang Foundation Lecture Series with the presentation of **SURVIVAL BY DESIGN: DESERT ARCHITECTURE AND THE END OF THE WORLD**, a lecture by visiting guest professor **Pamela Karimi** of Cornell University. Held at **USC's Doheny Memorial Library**, the lecture explored the sustainable architectural practices developed over centuries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to adapt to harsh desert environments. Professor Karimi examined how these eco-friendly methods were often dismissed by colonial powers and eroded with the twentieth century's reliance on fossil fuels and modern technologies. The discussion highlighted imaginative proposals for self-sustained disaster shelters and lunar settlements inspired by MENA's desert designs, contrasting well-funded projects by US experts with innovative contributions from marginalized figures like Iranian American architect **Nader Khalili**. By exploring various case studies, the lecture challenged the notion that environmental design solutions in the age of accelerated global warming are exclusively the domain of white/Euro-American expertise, emphasizing the enduring relevance and ingenuity of traditional Iranian desert architecture. This annual lecture series provides a great opportunity for USC to invite renowned Iranian scholars to campus for both student and public lectures.



Bahram Beyzaie's THE STRANGER AND THE FOG



Farhang Foundation was delighted to join forces with the **AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE** in presenting a special screening of living legend **Bahram Beyzaie's** fully restored masterpiece **THE STRANGER AND THE FOG**. This event featured a new 4K restoration of the film, accompanied by an introduction from Cinema Rex's **Faran Moradi** and **Kaveh Mohebbi**. Originally released in 1976, **THE STRANGER AND THE FOG** is a seminal work of the Iranian New Wave cinema, blending mythic storytelling with a dreamlike atmosphere. The narrative follows Ayat, a wounded stranger who arrives in a coastal village with no memory of his past, and explores themes of identity and destiny. Bahram Beyzaie, an award-winning filmmaker, theater director, and scholar, has been instrumental in revitalizing Iranian performing arts by integrating Iranian mythology with modern theater and cinema. His extensive body of work includes more than seventy publications and numerous films and plays.



Iranian Films
at the 2024

AFI FEST

PRESENTED BY *Canva*

Farhang Foundation was proud to continue our long partnership with the renowned **American Film Institute**, in sponsoring all the Iranian films at **AFI FEST 2024** in Los Angeles. The lineup included the Los Angeles premieres of **THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG** by **Mohammad Rasoulof**, **UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE** by **Matthew Rankin**, and **MY FAVOURITE CAKE** by **Maryam Moghadam** and **Behtash Sanaeeha**. These films offered diverse narratives, from Rasoulof's daring drama about two daughters defying their conservative father, to Rankin's imaginative tale set in a world where Persian is the dominant language, and Moghadam and Sanaeeha's portrayal of a widow seeking love in a repressive regime. The screenings were held at the **Chinese Theaters** in Hollywood, with each film showcasing the rich tapestry of Iranian cinema and storytelling.



IRANIAN FILMS AT THE NEWPORT BEACH 25th FILM FEST

The **Newport Beach Film Festival** presented the Orange County premieres of two notable films, including **UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE**, directed by **Matthew Rankin**, which explores themes of cultural identity and connection through the intertwined lives of Iranian high school students and a Canadian filmmaker in Winnipeg. Following this was **Mohammad Rasoulof's** award-winning masterpiece **THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG**, delving into the psychological unraveling of an Iranian judge amid political turmoil. Both films offered profound insights into personal and societal struggles. As part of the closing-night celebrations, guests were invited to a special event hosted at **Sherman Gardens** featuring Iranian cuisine prepared by **Maison de la Fork**, providing a delightful culinary experience to complement the evening's cinematic offerings. Farhang Foundation is proud to continue our partnership with the annual Newport Beach Film Festival in supporting all the Iranian films screened at this premiere festival in Orange County.



13th Annual Fundraising GALA

On November 16, 2024, Farhang Foundation proudly hosted its **13th Annual Fundraising Gala** at the iconic **Beverly Wilshire Hotel** in Beverly Hills. This highly anticipated evening, which sold out well in advance, brought together community leaders, patrons of the arts, and friends of the foundation for a night of celebration, culture, and purpose.

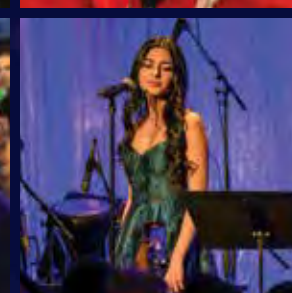
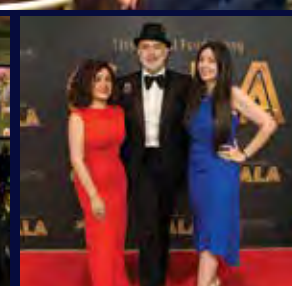
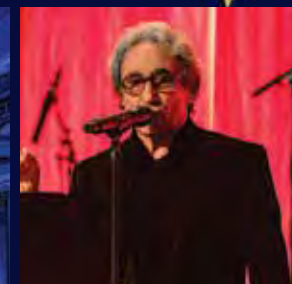
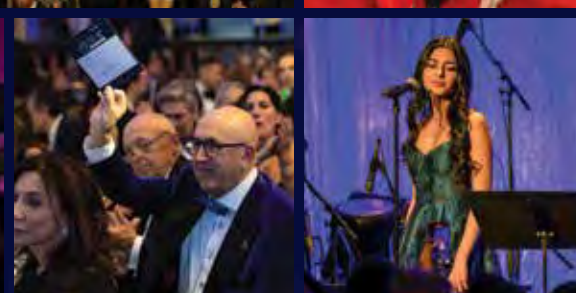
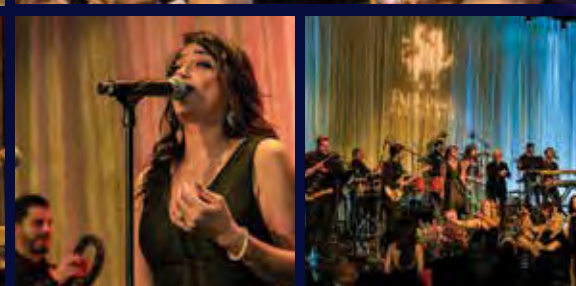
The gala, hosted with charm and humor by acclaimed comedian **Dan Ahdoot**, featured electrifying live performances by the legendary **Black Cats** and their founder, the iconic **Shahbal Shabpareh**, ensuring an unforgettable evening of music and entertainment.

More than a dazzling cultural event, the gala holds a singular place in Farhang Foundation's calendar: it is the only annual fundraising event of the foundation. As such, it plays a pivotal role in sustaining the foundation's wide-

ranging mission. The proceeds from this one evening directly fund and support over one hundred annual programs and initiatives across California and beyond, each dedicated to the celebration, preservation, and promotion of Iranian art and culture worldwide.

Through these initiatives, ranging from film festivals, public art installations, concerts, and theatrical performances, to museum partnerships, academic programs, and literary projects, Farhang Foundation continues to champion the rich cultural heritage of Iran while fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

The 13th Annual Gala was not only a night of celebration and joy, but also a testament to the enduring commitment of the Farhang community and its supporters, who ensure that Iranian art and culture thrive and remain accessible to audiences everywhere.



SUSSAN DEYHIM

Whispers from the Underworld

**CENTER
FOR THE ART OF
PERFORMANCE
UCLA**

Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with **CAP UCLA**, presented **WHISPERS FROM THE UNDERWORLD**, a concert by acclaimed composer and vocalist **Sussan Deyhim** at the **UCLA Nimoy Theater**. This seventy-five-minute performance melded ancient Middle Eastern musical traditions with modern technology, creating a haunting and layered vocal experience. The evening featured world premieres of Deyhim's compositions from collaborations with international artists, including excerpts from her work with director **Godfrey Reggio** and composer **Philip Glass** on the film **ONCE WITHIN A TIME**, produced by **Steven Soderbergh**. Additionally, the performance included pieces from her collaborations with Iranian visual artist and filmmaker **Shirin Neshat**, notably the Golden Lion-winning video installations **TURBULENT** and **LOGIC OF THE BIRDS**. Deyhim's four-octave vocal range and fusion of ritualistic ancient traditions with contemporary sonic elements left the audience in awe, underscoring her unique contribution to the global music and art landscape.



DISCLAIMER

by Tara Ahmadinejad

In collaboration with **CAP UCLA**, Farhang Foundation presented **DISCLAIMER**, a play written by **Tara Ahmadinejad** and developed by the live arts collective Piehole. Staged at the newly launched UCLA Nimoy Theater, the performance invited audiences into Nargis's living room for an interactive gathering aimed at preventing war with Iran. Blending the urgency of de-escalation with the intrigue of an Agatha Christie-style mystery, **DISCLAIMER** explored themes of identity, fear, and cultural (mis-) representation. The production featured minimally invasive audience participation and offered a unique theatrical experience that challenged perceptions and encouraged dialogue.



**CENTER
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PERFORMANCE
UCLA**



12TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF SHAB-E YALDA

FARHANG
FOUNDATION

THE WALLIS

GORDAFARID



SIRIYA ENSEMBLE

SHEENUBB

Thanks to the incredible support of the City of Beverly Hills, the 2024 Annual Celebration of **Shab-e Yalda** was held at **The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** in Beverly Hills. This age-old Iranian tradition, marking the arrival of the winter solstice, was celebrated with enchanting music, evocative poetry, and captivating storytelling. The event featured **Gordafarid**, Iran's first female "Naqqal" (traditional epic storyteller), renowned for her performances of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. Making their Los Angeles stage debut, the **Siriya Ensemble** from Bushehr, Iran, led by frontman **Mohammad Laryan**, performed music inspired by the rich soulful traditions of southern Iran. Opening for the Siriya Ensemble was none other than **Sheenubb**, making her US stage debut with her incredibly powerful songs. The evening was dubbed "From Bushehr to Beverly Hills," and the sold-out audience was dazzled with the beautiful music and storytelling, a great way to launch the holiday season with the original winter holiday that started it all thousands of years ago in Iran.



Wish You Were Here

کاش اینجا بودی

Farhang Foundation proudly celebrated the West Coast premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Sanaz Toossi's** *Wish You Were Here* at the prestigious **South Coast Repertory** in Costa Mesa. Opening night, held on January 17, 2025, was an unforgettable evening that marked the beginning of this highly anticipated production's run through February 2.

Guests were captivated by Toossi's powerful storytelling, brought vividly to life by a phenomenal cast featuring **Awni Abdi-Bahri** (Nazanin), **Sahar Bibiyan** (Rana), **Tara Grammy** (Salme), **Mitra Jouhari** (Zari), and **Artemis Pebdani** (Shideh). The production's depth and emotional resonance were masterfully shaped under the brilliant direction of Mina Morita, whose vision illuminated every moment on stage.



Voices in Shadow:

The Artistic Journey of Iranian Female Singers After the Revolution

Presented as part of the **UCLA Iranian Music Conference Series**, *Voices in Shadow* offered a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of the artistic, technical, and societal challenges faced by Iranian female vocalists in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, which banned solo performances by women in Iran.

Moderated by composer and music scholar **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, the panel featured renowned Iranian singers **Maliheh Moradi**, **Sahar Boroujerdi**, and **Mahbobeh Golzari**, who reflected on their personal journeys as artists working under systemic restrictions. The discussion highlighted the loss of public platforms, the disrupted transmission of traditional vocal techniques, and the resilience of female performers who continue to preserve and share Iranian classical music around the world.

In addition to storytelling and scholarly insight, the panel included live vocal demonstrations, offering attendees a rare glimpse into the refined techniques and interpretive depth of Iranian singing. Through historical context and artistic testimony, the event illuminated the enduring creativity and cultural contributions of Iranian women in music despite decades of censorship.

This free public event was made possible by the generous support of the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music**.

UCLA IRANIAN MUSIC
LECTURE SERIES



IRANIAN CINEMA

at San Francisco's YBCA

As part of Farhang Foundation's ongoing partnership with the **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)** in San Francisco, and in collaboration with the **UCLA Film and Television Archive**, the 2025 UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema made its exclusive San Francisco debut with three powerful and critically acclaimed Iranian films: **EMPTY NETS**, **IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS**, and **ROXANA**.

The screenings took place over three days, January 24 through January 26, at the YBCA screening room, and each event played to sold-out audiences. **EMPTY NETS** opened the series on January 24, spotlighting the world of caviar smuggling through a dramatic tale of love, ambition, and socioeconomic tension. On January 25 **IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS** offered a deeply affecting, multigenerational story of Afghan refugees navigating life in Iran, earning its directors the Best Directing award at Sundance. The series concluded on January 26 with **ROXANA**, a compelling portrait of disaffected youth in Tehran, caught between personal desire and social constraint.

Beyond the cinematic experience, attendees also had the opportunity to explore two powerful solo exhibitions by Iranian artists **Nicky Nodjoumi** and **Nahid Hagigat**, which were concurrently on view at YBCA. The weekend brought together both Iranian and non-Iranian community members to engage with contemporary Iranian storytelling and visual culture in a dynamic and meaningful way.



ROXANA



EMPTY NETS



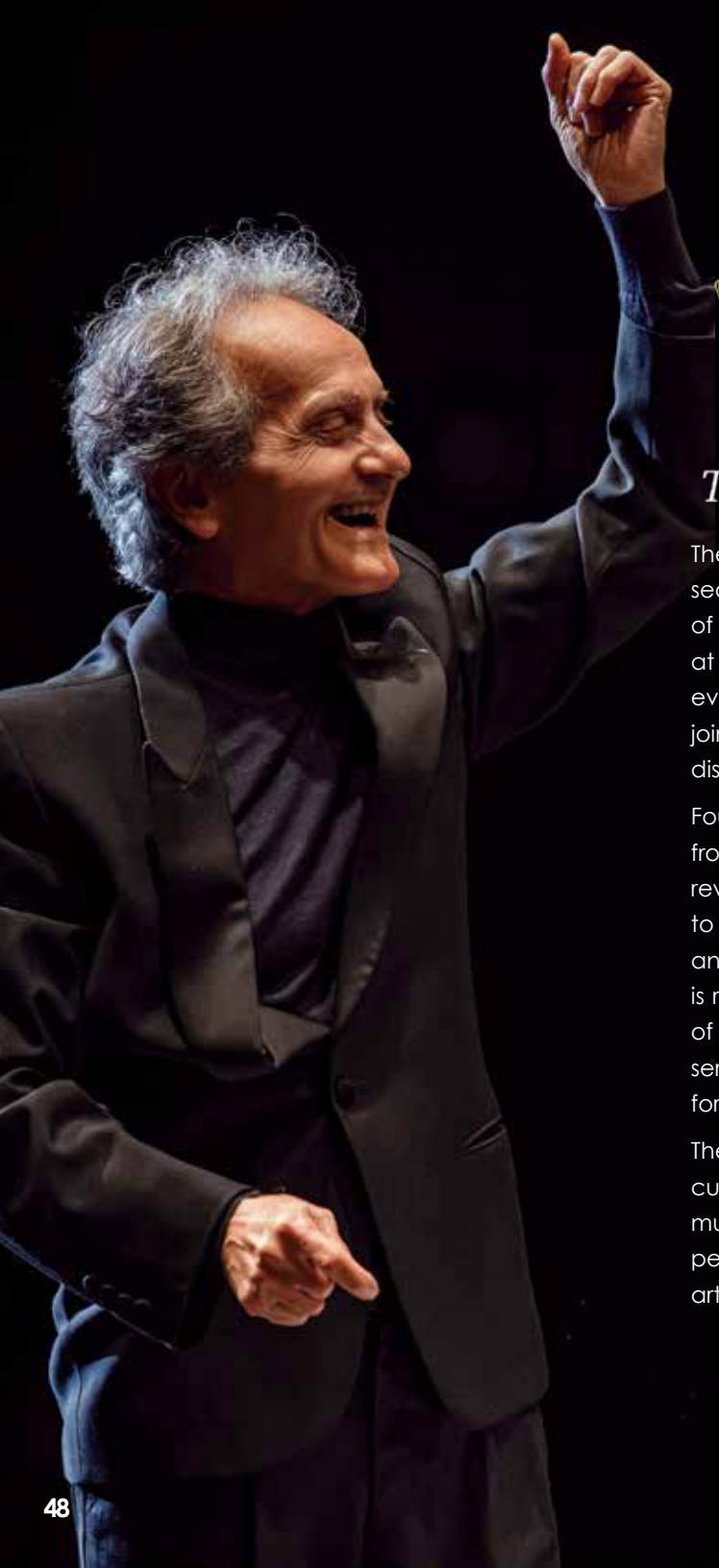
IN THE LAND OF BROTHERS

ART OF RESISTANCE

Iranian Diasporic Perspectives
on Revolutionary Creativity

On January 21, 2025, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)**, presented **ART OF RESISTANCE: IRANIAN DIASPORIC PERSPECTIVES ON REVOLUTIONARY CREATIVITY**. This panel discussion featured acclaimed Iranian artists **Shiva Ahmadi**, **Ala Eblekar**, and **Taraneh Hemami**, along with renowned art historian **Talinn Grigor**. Moderated by curator **Amy Kisch**, the conversation explored the intersection of art, activism, and cultural identity, examining how revolutionary art critiques the status quo and envisions alternative futures. The event aimed to highlight the role of art as a powerful tool for resistance, transformation, and dialogue, reflecting on sociopolitical landscapes both in Iran and within the diaspora.





Maestro Shardad Rohani's **ROUDAKI** ORCHESTRA

The Inaugural Season—Orange County

The highly anticipated Orange County debut as part of the inaugural season of the newly established **Roudaki Orchestra**, under the direction of the internationally acclaimed **Maestro Shardad Rohani**, was held at the **Irvine Barclay Theatre** on January 31, 2025. This unforgettable evening featured a powerful ensemble of forty exceptional musicians, joined by celebrated soprano **Raeeka Shehabi-Yaghmai** and the distinguished **Ava Choir**.

Founded by Maestro Rohani, the Roudaki Orchestra takes its name from the legendary ninth-century Persian poet and musician Roudaki, revered as the "father of Persian poetry." The name also pays homage to Tehran's iconic Roudaki Hall, a symbol of classical music's grandeur and cultural influence in Iran. Maestro Rohani's vision for the orchestra is rooted in honoring Iran's rich musical legacy through performances of works by classical and contemporary Iranian composers, while also serving as a platform for music education and professional opportunities for underrepresented artists.

The program reflected this mission with a moving and meticulously curated repertoire that highlighted the beauty and depth of Iranian musical traditions. From stirring orchestral pieces to soaring vocal performances, the evening captivated a packed audience with its artistry and cultural resonance.

the
Barclay
Irvine Barclay Theatre
CHENG HALL





“QOTTAB YAZDI” by **ELAHEH MIRAFZALI** FARHANG FLAVOR NOWRUZ EDITION



For its special Nowruz edition of Farhang Flavor, Farhang Foundation revisited the enchanting desert city of Yazd to reunite with beloved local chef **Elaheh Mirafzali** of Instagram's **@NoonONamak.Kitchen**. Known for her heartfelt dedication to preserving Yazdi culinary heritage, Chef Mirafzali shared the recipe for one of Yazd's most cherished and time-honored sweets, Qottab Yazdi, an ideal treat to celebrate the Iranian New Year. In this festive episode, viewers were treated to a warm and flavorful glimpse into Yazd's rich food culture, as Chef Mirafzali brought tradition to life through taste, storytelling, and the spirit of Nowruz.

NOWRUZ BANNERS IN LOS ANGELES & BEVERLY HILLS

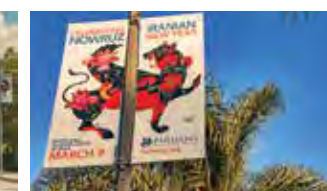
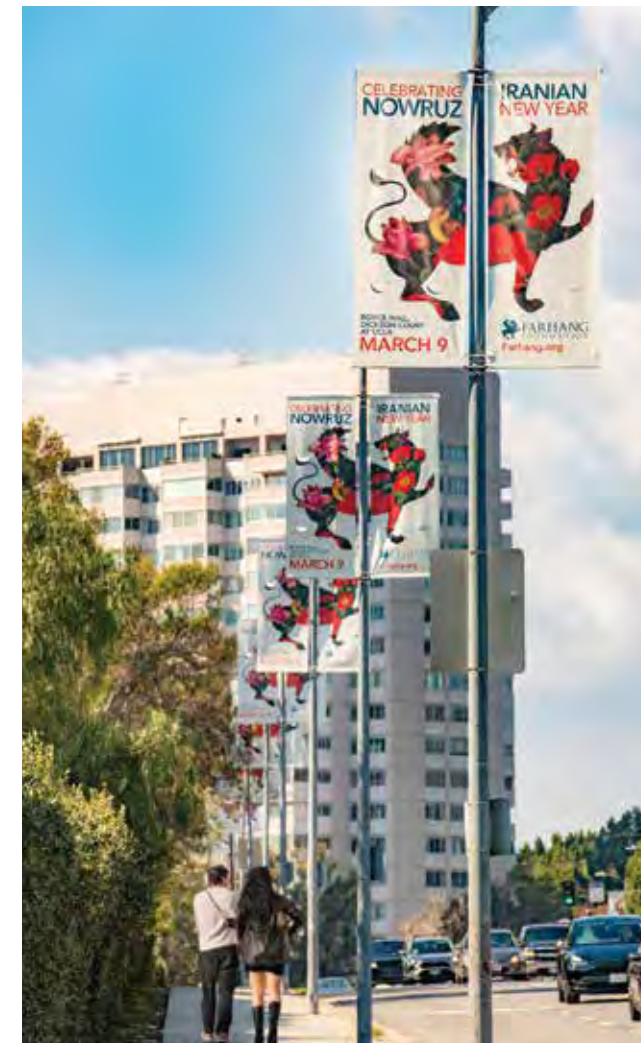


Farhang Foundation proudly celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of its beloved **Nowruz Banner Design Competition** in **2025** with a record-breaking public art campaign that adorned over six hundred street banners across Los Angeles. The winning design was created by **Rashid Rahnema**, a distinguished graphic artist based in **Melbourne, Australia**, whose artwork was selected for its vibrant and imaginative portrayal of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year.

Rahnema's striking design served as the visual centerpiece for Farhang's 2025 Nowruz campaign, bringing the spirit of renewal and joy to the streets of Los Angeles throughout February and March. In recognition of his outstanding contribution, Rahnema was awarded a \$2,000 cash prize, and his artwork was featured prominently across Farhang's digital platforms, social media, and promotional campaigns, leading up to the annual Nowruz celebration held on March 9 at UCLA's Dickson Court and Royce Hall.

"I am deeply honored and thrilled to have my design selected for this year's Farhang Nowruz campaign," said Rahnema. "The inspiration for this artwork draws from the rich cultural heritage of Iran, which I sought to encapsulate through a blend of historical symbolism and natural painting elements. By incorporating a winged lion-griffin from the Achaemenid period, an element also found in the Farhang Foundation logo, and adorning it with flowers and nightingales from Iranian paintings, I aimed to create a piece that symbolizes renewal, beauty, and the celebration of life, which are core themes of Nowruz. It is my hope that this design brings joy and inspiration to everyone as we celebrate Nowruz together."

Farhang Foundation's Nowruz Banner Design Competition, launched in 2011, continues to engage artists around the globe in a shared celebration of Iranian heritage through the visual arts. The 2025 campaign stood as a testament to the foundation's mission to amplify Iranian art and culture in the public sphere and to inspire community-wide celebration through creativity and design.





15TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF **NOWRUZ** AT UCLA

On Sunday, March 9, 2025, Farhang Foundation proudly welcomed the community back to **UCLA's Dickson Court** for the **15th Annual Celebration of Nowruz**, the world's largest free public celebration of the Iranian New Year. This milestone festival once again drew more than thirty thousand attendees from across Southern California and beyond, uniting people of all ages and backgrounds in a joyous day of culture, community, and renewal.



A DAY OF MUSIC, DANCE, AND CELEBRATION

The festival's main stage featured an electrifying lineup of live performances. Beloved Iranian pop star **Kamyar** closed the day with a dynamic concert that had the crowd on its feet, while host **Shally Zomorodi**, FOX 5 San Diego news anchor, guided audiences through the day's programming with her signature warmth and energy. Performances by the **LA Daf Ensemble**, **DJ Arin**, and the acclaimed **Melieka Fathi** and **Firuze Dance Companies** highlighted the diversity and vibrancy of Iranian music and dance traditions.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMING

True to Farhang Foundation's commitment to inclusivity and education, the celebration offered a wide range of interactive programming for children and families. Kids delighted in a lively puppet show by **Negar Estakhr** and **Maryam Rasekh**, storytelling sessions led by **Melody Roohani**, and a dedicated activity zone featuring arts and crafts, games, and cultural workshops throughout the day.



CULTURAL TREASURES AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

At the heart of the festival stood Farhang's **Grand Haft-Sin** display, a monumental and visually stunning centerpiece that symbolized the rebirth, beauty, and traditions of Nowruz. Attendees also enjoyed gathering at the beloved Iranian Tea House, where they sampled authentic Iranian flavors including freshly brewed tea, traditional sandwiches, shirini (sweets), and other delights.

HONORING TRADITION, BUILDING BRIDGES

Farhang Foundation's Nowruz Celebration has grown over the past fifteen years into an iconic Southern California tradition and one of the most anticipated cultural events in California. The 2025 celebration once again underscored Farhang's mission to promote and celebrate Iranian art and culture through free public events that are both educational and inspiring. Beyond the music and festivities, the event fostered cross-cultural dialogue and created cherished memories for tens of thousands of families who gathered to welcome the new year together.



THE NOWRUZ CONCERT AT ROYCE HALL

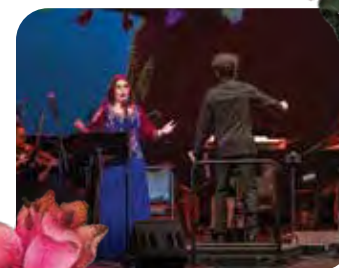
As the culminating event of Farhang Foundation's **15th Annual Celebration of Nowruz at UCLA**, the 2025 Nowruz Concert took place on the evening of March 9 at the historic **Royce Hall**, drawing a sold-out audience for a spectacular night of Iranian symphonic and vocal music.

Presented in collaboration with **UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music** and the **Iranian Music Program**, the concert featured the **Iranshahr Orchestra** under the baton of Music Director **Dr. Shahab Paranj**. The program included original compositions by an esteemed lineup of Iranian composers, including **Richard Danielpour**, **Ahmad Pejman**, **Reza Vali**, **Hasan Riahi**, **Kambiz Roshanravan**, **Heshmat Sanjari**, **Mahin Zarinpanjeh**, **Kaveh Mirhosseini**, **Amir Eslami**, and **Shahab Paranj** himself.

Two internationally celebrated guest vocalists graced the stage: **Mahdieh Mohammadkhani**, making her long-awaited return to the US after more than a decade, and acclaimed countertenor **Cameron Shahbazi**, whose powerful performance bridged classical and contemporary artistry. Together with the orchestra, they brought Iranian poetry, tradition, and modern expression to life through masterful musical storytelling.

The concert highlighted Farhang Foundation's ongoing mission to celebrate Iranian music at the highest artistic level, while also cementing the Iranshahr Orchestra's role as a pioneering force in Iranian symphonic music outside Iran.

UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music



2025 NOWRUZ AT CALTECH

Farhang Foundation was proud to support the 2025 Nowruz Celebration hosted by **Friends of Iranian Culture at Caltech**, an evening filled with music, storytelling, food, and festivity in honor of the Iranian New Year. Held on Saturday, March 15, at **Dabney Hall Lounge**, the celebration welcomed members of the **Caltech** and **JPL community** for an immersive cultural experience.

The evening featured live traditional Iranian music performed by a six-member ensemble, a storytelling session from the *Shahnameh*, and engaging activities including games and trivia. Guests enjoyed a catered Iranian dinner, and ice cream by Kinrose Creamery. The night concluded with an open dance floor, bringing everyone together in celebration and joy.



Nowruz Piruz

A Culinary Feast Celebrating the Iranian New Year

On March 28 and 29, 2025, Farhang Foundation, in partnership with Michelin-star restaurant **Knife Pleat**, proudly presented its annual **Nowruz Piruz** gourmet feast, a seven-course dining experience to celebrate the Iranian New Year. Held at Knife Pleat in South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, this exquisite event featured a signature caviar course crafted by award-winning **Chef Tony Esnault**, along with original recipes by **Shamsi Katebi**.

Guests embarked on a culinary journey through the rich flavors and traditions of Iranian cuisine, elegantly curated to mark the arrival of Nowruz. With its refined setting and gourmet offerings, Nowruz Piruz provided a memorable and unique way for attendees to embrace the spirit and joy of the Iranian New Year.



HAFT-SÎN

AT THE WESTFIELD CENTURY CITY SHOPPING CENTER



Beginning March 18, 2025, Farhang Foundation proudly continued its collaboration with the **Westfield Century City Shopping Center**, unveiling a breathtaking Grand Haft-Sîn installation in honor of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Designed with meticulous care by **A Seed and Stone**, these displays offered visitors an enchanting journey into the heart of

Iranian culture, highlighting the profound beauty and symbolism of this ancient tradition. Each element of the Haft-Sîn was thoughtfully crafted, celebrating the renewal and hope that Nowruz brings. Guests were invited to enjoy these captivating installations through March 31, immersing themselves in the festive ambience of Nowruz.

This year, on March 22, 2025, we celebrated Nowruz with shoppers in a new way. The festivities featured mesmerizing live performances by the amazing **Arezoo Koochakan** and her all-female **L.A. Daf Ensemble**, filling the air with the powerful rhythms of the daf drum and the spirit of Nowruz, and featuring dances by Elham of the **Doran Dance Company**.

Farhang Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to Westfield Century City for their dedication to honoring Nowruz. Their commitment to celebrating this timeless festival enriched Southern California's cultural landscape, bringing the vibrant spirit of Nowruz to the community with elegance and cultural pride.



NOWRUZ THE CONCERT

The Return of the Masters



58

Nowruz: The Concert—The Return of the Masters, a spectacular musical evening in celebration of the Iranian New Year, was held at the **Segerstrom Concert Hall** in collaboration with the **Pacific Symphony** and Music Director **Carl St.Clair**. The unforgettable concert featured the legendary **Pournazeri family trio—Kaykhosro, Tahmoures, and Sohrab Pournazeri**, alongside special guest vocalists **Sahar Boroujerdi** and **Donya Kamali** along with violinist **Tina Jamegarmi**, whose powerful performances brought the spirit of Nowruz to life through mesmerizing music rooted in classical and regional Iranian traditions.

The evening began with preconcert festivities in the concert hall lobby, including a stunning Haft-Sin display, accompanied by traditional musicians and dancers who welcomed guests with the rich rhythms and melodies. Attendees enjoyed an immersive cultural experience before taking their seats for a sold-out performance that wove together ancient heritage and contemporary artistry.

This landmark concert not only showcased the exceptional talents of Iran's musical masters but also affirmed Pacific Symphony's and Farhang Foundation's ongoing commitment to sharing the richness of Iranian art and culture with diverse audiences.



59



Farhang Foundation proudly presented the electrifying San Francisco debut of the **Siriya Ensemble**, one of Iran's most compelling musical groups, in a one-night-only performance that captivated audiences with a stirring fusion of southern Iranian folk music and contemporary soundscapes. Held at the **Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA** on February 22, 2025, the performance marked a cultural milestone in the Foundation's commitment to bringing the richness of Iranian music to broader audiences.

The evening featured a powerful and soul-stirring collaboration with genre-blending vocalist **Sheenubb**, whose bold and emotionally resonant performance added a modern and experimental edge to the deeply rooted traditional rhythms of southern Iran. Together, Siriya and Sheenubb offered an immersive musical journey that honored the region's folkloric heritage while reimagining it through inventive arrangements and global influences.

Led by frontman **Mohammad Laryan**, the Siriya Ensemble, originally from **Bushehr, Iran**, brought the distinctive spirit of Iran's southern coast to life. Their repertoire included original compositions and

reinterpretations of classical Persian poetry from Rumi, Hafez, and Saadi, woven with local lyrics, percussion, and vocal harmonies that paid homage to the deep cultural wellspring of their homeland.

Sheenubb, an Iranian-born, Los Angeles-based singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, brought her unique artistry to the stage through a vibrant and fearless blend of Iranian traditions and global music genres. Trained in music, design, and theater, Sheenubb had previously performed at prestigious venues in Iran and abroad, and her work had garnered international acclaim. Her presence at the event not only amplified the evening's contemporary tone but also underscored the power of cultural storytelling through female artistry.

Audiences were treated to a night of artistic innovation and cultural connection, as the performance illuminated the transformative power of Iranian music in the diaspora. This event stood as a testament to the vibrancy of Iranian heritage, and the capacity of music to transcend borders, generations, and genres. This program was a part of the Nicky Nodjoumi and Nahid Hagigat solo exhibitions at the YBCA.



FARHANG CONNECT

Live Virtual Talks by Influential
Iranians and Scholars of Iran



AFRUZ AMIGHI

TO THOSE WHOM
NO ONE OWNS

In Conversation with
NAZ CUGUOGLU

On May 22, 2024, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Asian Art Museum** of San Francisco, presented an engaging virtual conversation featuring esteemed artist **Afruz Amighi** and assistant curator of contemporary art **Naz Cuguoglu**. The conversation delved into Amighi's latest commissioned project, **TO THOSE WHOM NO ONE OWNS**, exploring its themes and artistic nuances. Amighi was born in Tehran in 1974, and her diverse artistic practice encompasses large-scale installations, sculpture, drawing, performance, and poetry, often utilizing industrial materials to play with light and shadow. Her works are part of prestigious collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Victoria & Albert Museum.



ALA EBTEKAR

LUMINOUS GROUND



In Conversation with
NAZ CUGUOGLU



On November 5, 2024, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Asian Art Museum** of San Francisco, hosted a virtual conversation featuring renowned artist **Ala Ebtekar** and assistant curator of contemporary art **Naz Cuguoglu**. The discussion centered on Ebtekar's monumental installation, **LUMINOUS GROUND**, commissioned by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. This breathtaking piece comprises imprinted handmade clay tiles that form a vast image of the cosmos, inspired by celestial motifs in traditional Iranian architecture. Instead of abstract geometric patterns, the tiles feature a mesmerizing photograph captured by the Hubble Space Telescope, inviting viewers to explore the universe's distant reaches and reflect on the history of our cosmos. The event provided an enriching insight into how Ebtekar merges traditional craftsmanship with a cosmic narrative, offering a contemporary reinterpretation of age-old artistic themes.





NICKY NODJOURNI

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL



In Conversation with DR. LAYLA S. DIBA

On December 14, 2024, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), hosted a live virtual talk featuring renowned Iranian contemporary artist **Nicky Nodjourni** in conversation with esteemed scholar and curator **Dr. Layla S. Diba**. The discussion delved into Nodjourni's solo exhibition **THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL**, which was on display at YBCA in San Francisco through February 22, 2025. The exhibition showcased Nodjourni's powerful, surreal paintings, which employ bold, kaleidoscopic imagery to explore the nuanced and often unsettling realities of political power and its influence on the human experience. This event provided audiences with rich insights into Nodjourni's distinctive style and the deeper narratives woven into his art.



NAHID HAGIGAT ETCHED IN TIME

In Conversation with PANTEA HAGHIGHI

Farhang Foundation presented a compelling live virtual conversation with acclaimed Iranian American artist **Nahid Hagigat** and curator **Pantea Haghighi** in celebration of Hagigat's powerful solo exhibition **ETCHED IN TIME**, on view at **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** in San Francisco. The event offered an intimate look into Hagigat's deeply feminist and visually striking work, which merges traditional Iranian aesthetics with bold explorations of identity, memory, and resilience.

In dialogue with Haghighi, the artist shared insights into her creative process, the evolution of her narrative-driven practice, and her lifelong commitment to amplifying women's voices through art. This enriching discussion brought audiences closer to the heart of one of Iran's pioneering contemporary artists and celebrated the enduring impact of her work across cultures and generations.

Lectures on Iranian History, Literature, and Culture

UC SANTA BARBARA
IRANIAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Iranian Studies Initiative at UC Santa Barbara**, continues to present the annual **Iranian Studies Initiative Virtual Lecture Series**, a cornerstone program that advances global access to world-class scholarship on Iranian history, literature, and culture.

This season, the series featured distinguished scholars from leading institutions across the globe, including **Dr. Farshad Sonbolde** (University of California, San Diego), **Dr. Ali Mirsepassi** (New York University), **Dr. Soraya Tremayne** (Oxford University), **Dr. Golnar Nikpour** (Dartmouth College), and **Dr. Amir A. Afkhami** (The George Washington University). Lecture topics reflected the remarkable breadth and depth of the field, ranging from studies of the poetry of Mohammad Moqaddam to new perspectives on the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and *Pandemics in Late Modern Iran*.

Since its inception, the lecture series has been designed to extend the reach of Iranian studies beyond the walls of academia, ensuring that these critical conversations are accessible to students, educators, and the public worldwide. To date, twenty-two episodes have been recorded and are available in Farhang Foundation's online archives, serving as a durable resource for future

scholarship. Collectively, these lectures have been viewed over **335,000 times** by audiences in more than **35 countries**, underscoring both the series's impact and the growing global demand for deeper engagement with Iranian cultural and historical studies.

By convening internationally recognized scholars and a global audience, Farhang Foundation reaffirms its commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and preserving Iranian heritage. The Iranian Studies Initiative Virtual Lecture Series stands as an enduring testament to the Foundation's mission to promote Iranian art and culture on an international stage.

Farhang Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to **Dr. Janet Afary**, director of the Iranian Studies Initiative at UC Santa Barbara, for her leadership and stewardship of this lecture series. Her vision and guidance have been instrumental in shaping the program's scholarly excellence and global reach.



**MOHAMMAD MOQADDAM,
A PROSE POET:**

Introducing free verse
into Persian poetry

DR. FARSHAD SONBOLDE



**INCONCEIVABLE
IRAN:**

To Reproduce or
Not to Reproduce

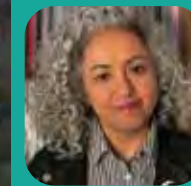
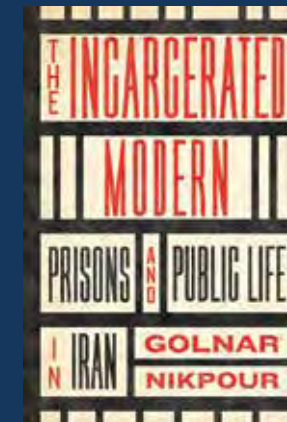
DR. SORAYA TREMAYNE



**THE LONELIEST
REVOLUTION:**

A Memoir of Solidarity
and Struggle in Iran

DR. ALI MIRSEPASSI



**PRISONS AND
PRISONERS IN
MODERN IRAN**

DR. GOLNAR NIKPOUR

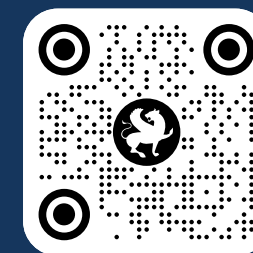


**PANDEMICS IN LATE
MODERN IRAN:**

Sociopolitical Continuities
From Cholera to COVID-19

DR. AMIR A. AFKHAMI

Watch all episodes at:
Farhang.org/UCSB



FARHANG PERFORMANCES

With eighty-seven episodes to date and over ten million views from more than fifty countries, the Farhang Performances Virtual Series continues to bring Iranian art and culture to a truly global audience.

This fiscal year, the Farhang Performances Virtual Series continued its mission of bringing Iranian performing arts to audiences worldwide through free and accessible programming. Highlights included the premiere of **EY ZAN**, a moving musical tribute to the strength of women featuring **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina Deris**; **ZER ZERA**, a bold new track by **Peyman Salimi** recorded live in Brooklyn; and **LELLAH**, a mesmerizing music video by **Sheenubb** blending Iranian storytelling with the soulful vibes of southern Iran's Bushehr.

The acclaimed band **Pallett** returned to Los Angeles after eight years, with their concert and the special live recording of **FROM EASTERN LANDS** featuring **Erwin**

Khachikian, both presented as part of the series. Celebrations for Nowruz included **ATASH-E NOWRUZ** by Gordafarid, the reimagined folk song classic **GOLI** by the **Rangin Kaman Ensemble**, and the children's story of **PARVAZ-E KAYKAVOOS BE ASEMAN**, a dramatic retelling from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* by Gordafarid.

Together, the Farhang Performances programs exemplify the breadth of Iranian artistry, from contemporary compositions to epic storytelling, affirming the series as a vital platform for preserving tradition, inspiring innovation, and sharing Iranian culture on a global stage.







Persian 101 Persian Language and Culture After-School Program

Farhang Foundation believes that the most immediate and enduring way to preserve Iranian heritage and honor its culture, history, and language is through education.

In 2015, with the community's support, Farhang Foundation launched the first-ever **Persian Language and Culture After-School Program** in partnership with local public and private schools in Southern California. This program, which is provided free of charge to participating schools, creates a platform for K-12 students to be exposed to Iran's rich and beautiful language and culture. To date, more than three thousand students have enrolled in this free program throughout Southern California.



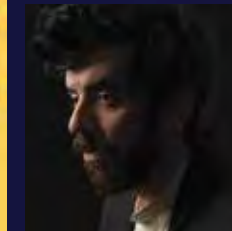
FARHANG LITERATURE

With Host
Abdi Nazemian



A New Virtual Book Club Series

This year, Farhang Foundation proudly launched Farhang Literature, its inaugural virtual book club series celebrating contemporary works that reflect Iranian culture and experiences. Hosted by best-selling author **Abdi Nazemian**, the program brings acclaimed authors into conversation with global audiences, fostering dialogue on themes of identity, history, and storytelling.



MARTYR!

New York Times Bestseller by Kaveh Akbar

The series debuted with **Kaveh Akbar's MARTYR!**—a *New York Times* bestseller published by Knopf Publishing Group and named among the paper's Best Books of the Year So Far. In conversation with Nazemian, Akbar explored themes of faith, art, and self-discovery through the novel's protagonist, Cyrus Shams, the son of Iranian immigrants.



The Lion Women of Tehran

by Best-Selling Author Marjan Kamali

The second installment featured **Marjan Kamali's THE LION WOMEN OF TEHRAN**, a national bestseller published by Simon & Schuster and praised by *People* magazine as "an evocative read and a powerful portrait of friendship, feminism, and political activism." Kamali's conversation with Nazemian examined her themes of resilience, identity, and the lives of two young women in 1950s Tehran.

With these inaugural episodes, Farhang Literature has quickly established itself as a vital cultural program, amplifying Iranian voices in literature and reaffirming the Foundation's commitment to promoting dialogue, storytelling, and cultural understanding worldwide.

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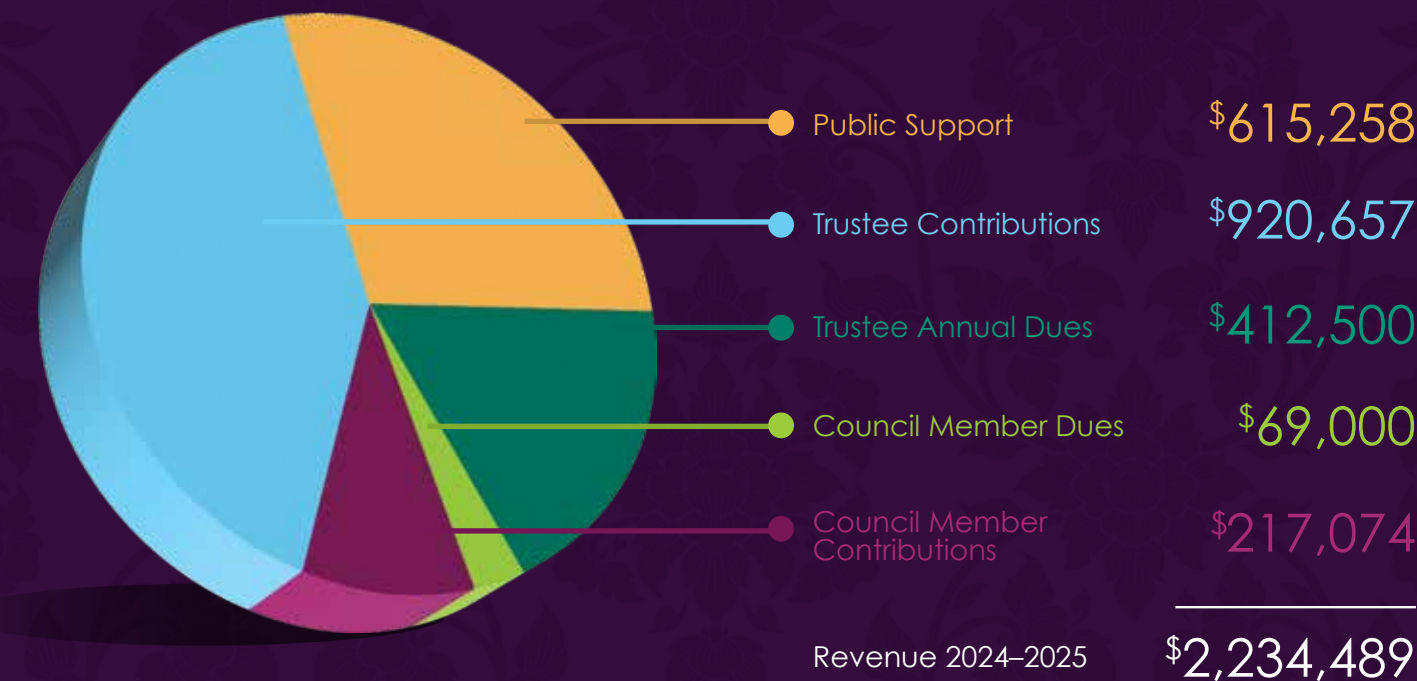
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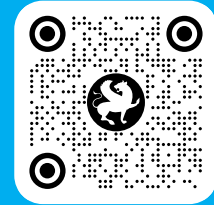


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