

## Islam and Christianity Interfaith Dialogue underway in Moscow



IRNA - The 12th round of Islam and Christianity Interfaith Dialogue is being held in Moscow from February 20 to 22, with the theme of public services provided by religious communities in the pandemic era, Iran's cultural attaché in Moscow said.

Masoud Ahmadvand said that a delegation headed by Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipour, the head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), are attending the meeting.

Ahmadvand said that the meeting is underway after a four-year hiatus due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He reiterated the papers that are presented in this round of meetings are on such topics as interactions between the secular and the theological education systems, the experience of priests in universities, the social services for believers in the post-COVID world, and the prerequisites and factors for Iran-Russia cooperation in social and humanitarian fields in the post-pandemic era.

## Report shows UK cities need arts

Amore inclusive approach is needed to stimulate the UK economy as the link between low cultural engagement and deprivation becomes ever more apparent. This is the main message from a report recently released by Key Cities - a national network, established a decade ago, that represents 27 tier two and tier three urban centres across the UK, such as Bath, Hull and Reading.

The new research, undertaken in partnership with Arts Council England, cross-references new data on cultural engagement (among these cities) with their scores in the Office of National Statistics Index of Multiple Deprivation. The findings show a clear correlation between cities with a limited cultural offer and higher socioeconomic deprivation.

By looking in detail at what culture means for the aforementioned 27 cities, and how that translates into public funding programmes, the new report highlights culture's role in boosting local economies.

License Holder:  
Managing Director:

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
Abas Aslani

Editorial Dept. Tel:  
Editorial Dept. Fax:  
ICPI Publisher:

+98 21 88913453  
+98 21 88930684  
+98 21 88548892, 5

Advertising Dept. Tel & Email:  
Website:

+98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com  
www.irandaily.ir  
newspaper.irandaily.ir

Email:  
Printing House:

irandaily@icpi.ir  
Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of  
Shahid Motehary St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran



Iran Daily has no responsibility whatsoever for advertisements and promotional material printed in the newspaper.



irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7241 • Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 • Price 40,000 Rials • 12 Pages

# Iranian orchestra conductor: Time is ripe for developing Iran's religious music in the world



Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

However, in this year's festival I was offered to perform the 'Prophet of Kindness' concert on the occasion of Mab'ath (a Muslim feast that marks the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the messenger of God). The piece of music was composed by Milad Aqaei, a young Iranian musician who holds a master's degree in music from the University of Tehran, College of Art. The musical program is based on Nizami Ganjavi's poems, in the form of Cantata, which is intended to be sung. 'Prophet of Kindness' was made for string and timpani orchestra, as well as choir groups. At the end of the day, performing this piece was a very complicated and difficult task.

You are experienced in conducting concerts with a national and religious background. Can you expound on that?

I am an orchestra conductor, and usually the orchestral programs coincide with national and religious events and occasions. For instance, the IRIB Symphony Orchestra was the only

orchestra which staged a concert on September 22, on the occasion of the beginning of the Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq war). It was staged in the Museum of the Islamic Revolution & Sacred Defense, comprising works with national and religious themes, including 'Neynava' by Hossein Alizadeh, and the unforgettable performances of the Sacred Defense. In other words, there might be programs throughout the year, some of which are related to the celebration and commemoration of our religious leaders, while others are related to mourning occasions.

How do you feel about performing music programs with ritual and religious themes?

Since we Iranians have grown up with this type of music from childhood, we can all communicate with it. For instance, the mourning days of the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram are familiar to us all. This is also true for me, especially since I spent my childhood in downtown Tehran where there are several mourning ceremonies for Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions. Those mourning groups, marches and mournful musical sounds have created a nos-



talgic feeling in me.

Do you think that our religious concerts such as 'Prophet of Kindness' can be performed at an international level?

Yes, these pieces are composed in such a way that they could be performed at an international level. Western classical music is being performed and welcomed in many countries due to its development in the world. Everywhere in the world, from Iran to Turkey and Indonesia and many other countries, there is usually a symphony orchestra that performs the music of their country alongside

the works of well-known Western composers such as Mozart and Beethoven. Now it's time to go the other way around. Religious music is the basis of Western music, because music in the West started from the church, and this was because the church wanted to influence people through music.

Now, we can create works like 'Prophet of Kindness,' which has an international musical language and can be performed anywhere in the world. This work was written and composed in such a way that when you give its musical notes to any country, even Western

and European countries, it can easily be performed and foreign audiences can communicate with it.

Do you have a plan to perform 'Prophet of Kindness' abroad?

Currently, we do not have any specific plan to stage it abroad. However, if the ground is paved, we are ready to perform it in other parts of the world. I will highly welcome the proposal due to the fact that I have the experience of performing and conducting Iranian works in countries like Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Iraq, and Azerbaijan.

## Let kids read for fun: *writer*

Adults should let children read the books they want, and not "dismiss or belittle a choice that a child has made themselves", says new BookTrust writer in residence SF Said. Said, an award-winning children's author, will take on the role - after writers and illustrators including Michael Rosen, Nadia Shireen, Cressida Cowell and Nick Sharratt - from 1 March, and use his six-month term to emphasise the benefits of reading for pleasure. BookTrust works with libraries, schools and more to give children access to books, including through programmes

such as Bookstart, which provides free books for every child in England and Wales up to five years old, the Guardian reported. Said's aim during his residency is to promote children's right to read what they want without judgment, whether that be graphic novels, picture books, short stories, poems, novels or nonfiction.

"It's so important for kids to know that they can read whatever brings them joy, whatever brings them pleasure," he says. "The kind of judgment where adults believe they know better than children is so damag-

ing, it's so limiting.

Said also believes that every child "can be a reader and gain all the incredible life-changing benefits of reading for pleasure and of literacy, without exception". Research has shown reading for pleasure boosts self-esteem and happiness, and breaks down social barriers, helps all children do better at school and improves job prospects. Said is the author of books including 'Varjak Paw,' which won the Smarties prize for children's literature, and its sequel 'The Outlaw Varjak Paw,' which was BBC Blue Pe-

ter book of the year. His third book 'Phoenix' was shortlisted for the Guardian children's fiction award, and nominated for the Carnegie and Kate Greenaway medals. His most recent novel is 'Tyger,' which draws upon Said's own experience of growing up as a British Muslim of Middle Eastern origin and is set in an alternate universe where slavery was never abolished. Reviewing the book in the Guardian, Kitty Empire called it a "tremendous counterfactual thriller that nods to William Blake and real historical events". According to Diana Gerald of

BookTrust, "the UK's body of children's literature overall remains far from representative". Its latest research found that 11.7% of children's book creators published in the UK in 2021 were people of colour, compared with 18% of the population at large. Even so, Said believes the children's book industry in the UK has "come a long, long way". Gerald said Said's "commitment to making reading feel accessible to all children makes him a fantastic force for change and we are honoured to have him on board as our new writer in residence".

UNESCO EU  
@UNESCOEU

Yesterday's blank posts weren't a mistake. It was an act of protest. We cannot allow the internet to fill with harmful content. We need to #RebootTheNet for an #InternetForTrust. Visit [on.unesco.org/3OzyWFI](https://on.unesco.org/3OzyWFI) to find out more.

11:39 AM - Feb 20, 2023

Xinhua Culture&Travel  
@XinhuaTravel

Dramatic bird's eye view of ancient monuments in hot air balloons in Egypt's Luxor

[xhtxs.cn/EPD](https://xhtxs.cn/EPD)  
11:16 AM - Feb 20, 2023

Getty  
@GettyMuseum

It's Pisces season! Medieval astrology describes this time as being great for buying and selling land and horses, sowing, planting, building things that deal with water like dikes and dams.

12:37 AM - Feb 20, 2023