

Iranian film awarded in Brazilian festival



IRNA – Iranian feature film 'Night is the Expectation of Day', written and directed by Moein Hasheminasab, won the Best Feature Film Award at the 2022 Brazil International Film Festival.

It was also nominated to receive the Best Musical Feature Film Award in the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival, which was held from September 8 to 18, 2022.

The film has already taken part in 11 international festivals. Hasheminasab was in charge of writing, directing, producing, filming, lighting and sound editing of the film.

Seven UK sites to win UNESCO World Heritage status



EURONEWS – Seven UK sites – including one in its overseas territories – are in the running to win UNESCO World Heritage status.

The ancient city of York, The Zenith of Iron Age Shetland in Scotland and The Little Cayman Marine Parks and Protected Areas, in the UK overseas territory of the Cayman Islands, are among the standouts on the list.

Birkenhead Park in Merseyside, in north west England, is also a popular addition.

The UNESCO designation, which is recognised globally, is given to places of historical, cultural or scientific significance. The UK is already home to 33 World Heritage sites in the UK, including Westminster Abbey, Stonehenge and Blenheim Palace. Globally, the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, Machu Picchu in Peru and the Acropolis of Athens are among the most famous on the list. The UK government adds choices to a 'tentative list', which is published about once a decade and includes locations they feel have the best chance of being included in the ranking.

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Elegies for mourning music in Iran



Many of the singing methods in Bushehr have disappeared due to lack of attention in passing them down to the next generations. Because many instructors and singers have died and are no longer among us.

Arts & Culture Desk

EXCLUSIVE

Music in Iran has a long and ancient history, especially music that has its roots in ancient rituals and traditions, folklores that have become obsolete or forgotten over the years, and perhaps are heard only in some remote cities or rural areas of Iran. One of these traditions is *sug* (mourning) music, which is the subject of this article.

A music researcher Seyyed Ruhollah Safavi, known by his penname, Aka Safavi, said in an interview with Iran newspaper about mourning music in southern Iran, "Bushehr is one of the southern provinces of Iran that still adheres to the values, culture and art of our country, especially in the field of vocal music. The most prominent vocal music performed in this region is *sharvehkhani*, which is an ancient type of Iranian music. In fact, it is a song performed mostly by men for people's gatherings. It goes without saying that in this region, women also sing songs in the form of lullabies, or in mourning ceremonies."

Speaking about the forgotten music of this region, he said, "Many of the singing

methods in Bushehr have disappeared due to lack of attention in passing them down to the next generations. Because many instructors and singers have died and are no longer among us."

According to Aka Safavi, "Ancient rites such as *sharvehkhani* underwent major changes over time and have moved far away from their original nature."

According to experts, *sharveh* is a pathetic sound that dates back to the Sassanid era, a kind of music that is the most important song and instrument of southern Iran.

Only if these southern music genres are performed, receive attention and are taught to music lovers, will they survive, said Aka Safavi.

He further noted, "Many people are interested in carrying out research in the music field. They believe that a vocalist should not only sing, but also conduct studies and be familiar with the local songs and various singing styles as well as musical instruments of his own region."

Another musicologist in the eastern part of Gilan Province, Mahmoud Farzinejad, said, "In Islamic provinces, the first mourning ceremony for Imam

Hussein (PBUH) was held in commemoration of Ashura during the Buyid dynasty. Up to this point, Shia Muslims did not seize great political power to hold public mourning ceremonies. Therefore, historians believe that the first people who officially mourned in the streets by chanting elegies and eulogies were in this period." He further added, "In fact, the origin of religious ceremonies in Iran lies in the mountainous areas of Deylaman, and since the Buyid dynasty was the source of spreading Shi'ism in the Islamic world, they expanded Gilan mourning rituals to all parts of Iran."

Speaking on religious ceremonies held in Gilan on the day of Ashura, he said, several programs will be performed from the first day of Muharram to the tenth, Ashura, one of which is *alamvachini*.

Another ritual is called *karnanavazi* (playing *karnay*, which is a metal trumpet). In fact, *karna* is a long wind instrument, the only ancient Iranian instrument left in Gilan, which is still used. During the day of Ashura, groups of 30 to 50 people or more play this instrument. In the old days, they used cow horns instead of *karna*,

but because it was heavy in weight and difficult to adjust the sound, nowadays they use pumpkins for ease of work. This instrument is used to call people to perform a sacred task, such as the mourning ceremonies of Ashura, or the announcement of the New Year (Nowruz).

In response to the question whether these rituals are still alive or have disappeared, he said, "Although in different areas of Gilan, especially in the mountains and villages, these rituals are still performed, unfortunately, the majority of the ancient rituals have become obsolete. And instead of this kind of folk music, meaningless sounds that have caused serious damage to the county's authentic music are being practiced. It is essential to preserve this mourning music."

Another music researcher in Khorasan, Ghafour Mohammadzadeh, said, "Regarding mourning rituals in the Khorasan region, I must say that this ritual is part of the music of Iran's ethnic groups that has been passed down from generation to generation. It includes elegies written about the great figures of Islam. For instance, in the eastern region of

Khorasan, such as Kashmar, the elegy of Mohammad-Hossein is usually performed."

In response to the question whether these sounds were accompanied by instruments or not, he said, "Currently, these sounds and songs are performed with instruments, but in bygone days they were performed without instruments. For example, 'Gol Mohammad' is a motherly song that a mother used to whisper to herself, but later, it was accompanied by an instrument in each region and sung in a narrative form. Fortunately, some of these mourning rituals and music are still performed."

Mohammadzadeh said that the music of mourning is different from the music performed during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar.

He further said, "In eastern Khorasan, mourning ceremonies and *ta'zieh* (Persian passion play) are not performed. However, in South Khorasan, a series of ceremonies are performed that are specific to this region, such as *nakhlgardani* (an act of carrying a great box from one point to another, resembling Imam Hussein's funeral), or *mash'algardani* (an act of moving a torch)."

Shi'ism in Nigeria is indebted to Islamic Revolution



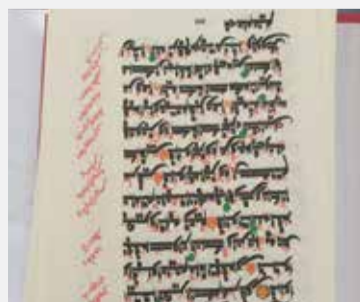
Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

The revival of the Islamic culture and the spread of Shi'ism in Nigeria is owed to Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, said a Nigerian activist in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily.

Muhammad Mukhtar Ab-

dullah described the revolutionary movement of Iranians in 1979 as inspirational to the people of all countries, particularly Nigeria. "Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution triggered the Islamic Awakening in my country and bore great fruits for Nigerians," he added. Abdullah, who runs Nigeria's booth in the 30th International Holy Qur'an Exhibition, noted that he comes from the most densely populated country



in Africa, where more than 70 percent of its people are Muslims.

Shi'ism had not taken root deeply in Nigeria, he clarified, before the efforts of a Nigerian religious leader named Ibraheem Yaqoub el-Zakzaky.



After meeting with the late Imam Khomeini in Iran, El-Zakzaky returned to his country and familiarized Nigerians with the Shia Imams and the great tragedy of Ashura.

"El-Zakzaky's words were

so influential in opening the minds of Nigerians to various topics and issues that many of them, even the ones who practiced other religions, embraced Shi'ism, making Nigeria the country with the largest Shia population in Africa,"

maintained the activist.

"I myself adopted Shi'ism 27 years ago because of El-Zakzaky's teachings and have been in Iran for a few years," he said, adding that he has recently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in the field of Qur'anic hermeneutics. Describing the International Holy Qur'an Exhibition held in Tehran as one of the biggest Qur'anic exhibitions in the world, Muhammad Mukhtar Abdullah expressed happiness with the opportunity that the exhibition provides for getting in contact with foreign specialists working in the field of the Qur'an.

"I've seen scholars and representatives of various countries introduce the Islamic and Qur'anic activities of their respective nations to visitors in the international section of the exhibition."

Like many other countries, Nigeria's booth has put on display a number of Qur'ans and prayers masterfully written and illuminated by hand.

The 30th International Holy Qur'an Exhibition opened at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Grand Prayer Grounds (Mosalla) on April 1, 2023, and welcomes visitors through April 15.