

Tehran to stage 'Reflections of Spain' show



ISNA – A group painting exhibition entitled 'Reflections of Spain' (Reflejos de España) will be held in Bahar and Tabestan Galleries of the Iranian Artists Forum, from May 4 to 15. Curated by Hamid Pazuki, the show will feature works by 18 artists including Ehsan Azari, Razieh Iranpour, Yasna Askari and Payam Yassini.

Canadian songwriter Lightfoot dies

REUTERS – Canadian musician Gordon Lightfoot, the prolific singer-songwriter known for such folk-pop hits as 'If You Could Read My Mind' and 'The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,' died in a Toronto hospital. He was 84. He died of natural causes, his family said in a statement released by publicist Victoria Lord.

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Iran to host ECO states culture ministers' conference

Arts & Culture Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran is preparing to host an upcoming conference for the culture ministers of the member states of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI). The conference is scheduled to take place on June 13 in Tehran, Iran's capital, MEHR news agency reported. Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili will preside over the conference.

During a meeting attended by Culture Ministry officials, Iran's Deputy Director of the Islamic Culture and Re-



lations Organization (ICRO) Hossein Rouzbeh, emphasized the need for all-inclusive cooperation to ensure

an excellent meeting. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental orga-

nization in Asia that was founded in Tehran in 1985 by leaders from Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. It serves

as a platform for discussions on ways to enhance development and promote trade and investment opportunities.

Thousands of Hollywood film, TV writers to go on strike

THE GUARDIAN – Thousands of film and television writers are to go on strike, throwing Hollywood into turmoil as the entertainment business grapples with seismic changes triggered by the global boom in TV streaming. The Writers Guild of America (WGA) called its first stoppage in 15 years, starting on Tuesday, after failing to reach an agreement on higher pay from studios such as Walt Disney and Netflix. The previous strike lasted 100 days and cost California's economy more than \$2bn. The WGA said in a statement on its website: "The companies' behaviour has created a gig economy inside a union workforce, and their immovable stance in this negotiation has betrayed a commitment to further devaluing the profession of writing." The guild represents approximately 11,500 writers in New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere. Writers say they have suffered financially during the TV streaming boom, partly because of shorter seasons and smaller residual payments. Half of TV series writers now work at minimum salary levels, compared with one-third in 2013-14, according to guild statistics. Median pay for scribes at the higher writer/producer level has fallen 4% over the last decade. Artificial intelligence is another issue at the bargaining table. The WGA wants safeguards to prevent studios from using AI to generate new scripts from writers' previous work. Writers also want to ensure they are not asked to rewrite draft scripts created by AI. Further ahead, the strike could lead to a delay of the autumn TV season. Writing for these shows normally starts in May or June. If the work stoppage becomes protracted, the networks will increasingly fill their programming lineups with unscripted reality shows, news magazines and reruns. Netflix may be insulated from any immediate impact because of its global focus and access to production facilities outside the US.



Girls' Music Conservatory: Preserving Iran's musical heritage



Arts & Culture Desk

The Girls' Music Conservatory in Tehran is a revered institution that has been a symbol of musical education for over a century. Founded in 1914, it is the first music school in Iran, which later became an academy in 1933, two years after adding an advanced course. The tireless efforts and contributions of legendary music teachers, such as Abolhassan Saba, Nasrollah Zarin-Panjeh, Hossein Alizadeh, and Hossein Dehlavi, have left an indelible mark on Iranian music, inspiring the next generation of Iranian musicians.

Conservatory's history

In 1949, the academy became further active in teaching Iranian music, thanks to the efforts of Rouhollah Khaleqi. The Girls' Music Conservatory, which is one of the two branches of the institution after 1979, celebrated its centenary in 2018. Parisa Zehtabian, the current director, recently spoke about the institution's activities, providing insights into the academy's history and current state. The conservatory's curriculum encompasses two prominent genres

of music: Iranian and classical. Students at the conservatory learn to play a diverse range of instruments, including eight indigenous Iranian instruments, such as the *santoor*, *qanun*, *tar*, *setar*, *oud*, *kamancheh*, *ney*, and *qeychak*, and 12 classical instruments, such as the piano, violin, cello, viola, alto, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and bassoon. To gain admission to the academy, students must have completed the sixth grade and cleared theory and solfège tests. Additionally, they must undergo a selection process to determine their preferred instrument, which could be one they have been previously trained in or one that matches their physicality, proclivity, and aptitude, as per the discretion of the jury and professors.

The conservatory's educational books are classified into two categories, including general and specialized courses. While certain course books, such as 'Fundamentals of Iranian Music' and 'Iranian and Global Instrumentation,' have prescribed texts, other courses, such as 'History of World Music,' 'Group Singing,' and 'History of Iranian Music,' are bereft of such textbooks.

Conservatory's current state

The conservatory's educational system has undergone several transformations since 1972. Currently, a system called the 6.3.3 educational system (six years of elementary courses, three years of intermediate courses, three years of advanced courses) is in place. The conservatory's halls are adorned with portraits of legendary music teachers who have left an indelible mark on Iranian music. The passion for music is palpable among the students who practice and play outside of class hours on every floor. Almost every classroom has a mirror to help students refine their technique and posture. The conservatory's goal is to secure the cooperation of the finest conservatory professors and financial backing to enable these courses to be available to students in the form of books, thereby facilitating superior education.

Instrument selection

After passing the theory and solfège test, students must undergo an instrument selection process. Participants who have already worked with a particular instrument will take the test on that instrument. However, for those who are new to music, they will be provided with a variety of instruments to choose

from, including piano, guitar, violin, drums, and more.

"Our music teachers will guide them through the process and help them choose an instrument that suits their interests and abilities. We understand that choosing an instrument can be a daunting task, especially for beginners. Therefore, we provide students with the opportunity to try out different instruments before making their final decision," Zehtabian says.

Future of music education

When asked about the future prospects of music education, the conservatory's director confidently stated that the future luminaries of the music industry are the current students of music conservatories. A significant proportion of the country's musical prospects rests with the graduates of these centers. In recent years, officials from Iran's Culture Ministry have endeavored to establish music conservatories in various cities. Zehtabian finds this initiative highly commendable as it caters to the needs of society. However, she notes that numerous students from diverse regions of Iran have applied for music education, but due to the absence of a conservatory in their city, they have either been denied education or forced to relocate to Tehran, which presents its own set of challenges.

