

Iranian Bolourchi adds another award to his collection



Arts & Culture Desk

IRNA – Pejman Bolourchi, a world-famous composer and dulcimer player, won the first prize of the World's Best Musicians Competition for his piece 'Contemplation'.

Bolourchi's musical piece, which was the only piece representing Iran at the American festival, was composed in 2021.

This is the second time in the current year that the composer was awarded at this festival. The first time he won a gold medal for his 'Nature Dance'.

The recognition adds to his already impressive list of accolades, which includes winning the Akademia Music Awards in the United States.

'Nature Dance' has garnered widespread acclaim since its release, receiving recognition at the Global Music Awards in January 2022.

Also the esteemed director of the Nahaleh Rudaki Cultural and Art Institute, Bolourchi holds a high position in the realm of Iranian music. His extensive body of work includes captivating solos, ensembles, and compositions that have left an unforgettable mark on the Iranian music scene.

Mirkarimi's 'The Night Guardian' to hit silver screen in Georgia



ISNA – 'The Night Guardian' by Reza Mirkarimi has been invited as Iran's representative to the 24th Tbilisi International Film Festival in Georgia.

The festival began on November 26 and will run through December 3.

Mirkarimi's film, which debuted at the Fajr Film Festival last year, received nine award nominations and ultimately won the best director category.

Co-written by Mirkarimi and Mohammad Davoud, 'The Night Guardian' follows the story of an innocent village boy whose carefree life is disrupted by his trust in a construction engineer.

After leaving his village due to drought, Rasoul is relieved to find employment as a night guardian at a construction site. However, he soon discovers that something sinister is happening at the seemingly deserted location. As he becomes ensnared in the peculiar circumstances surrounding him, Rasoul finds himself trapped and in danger.

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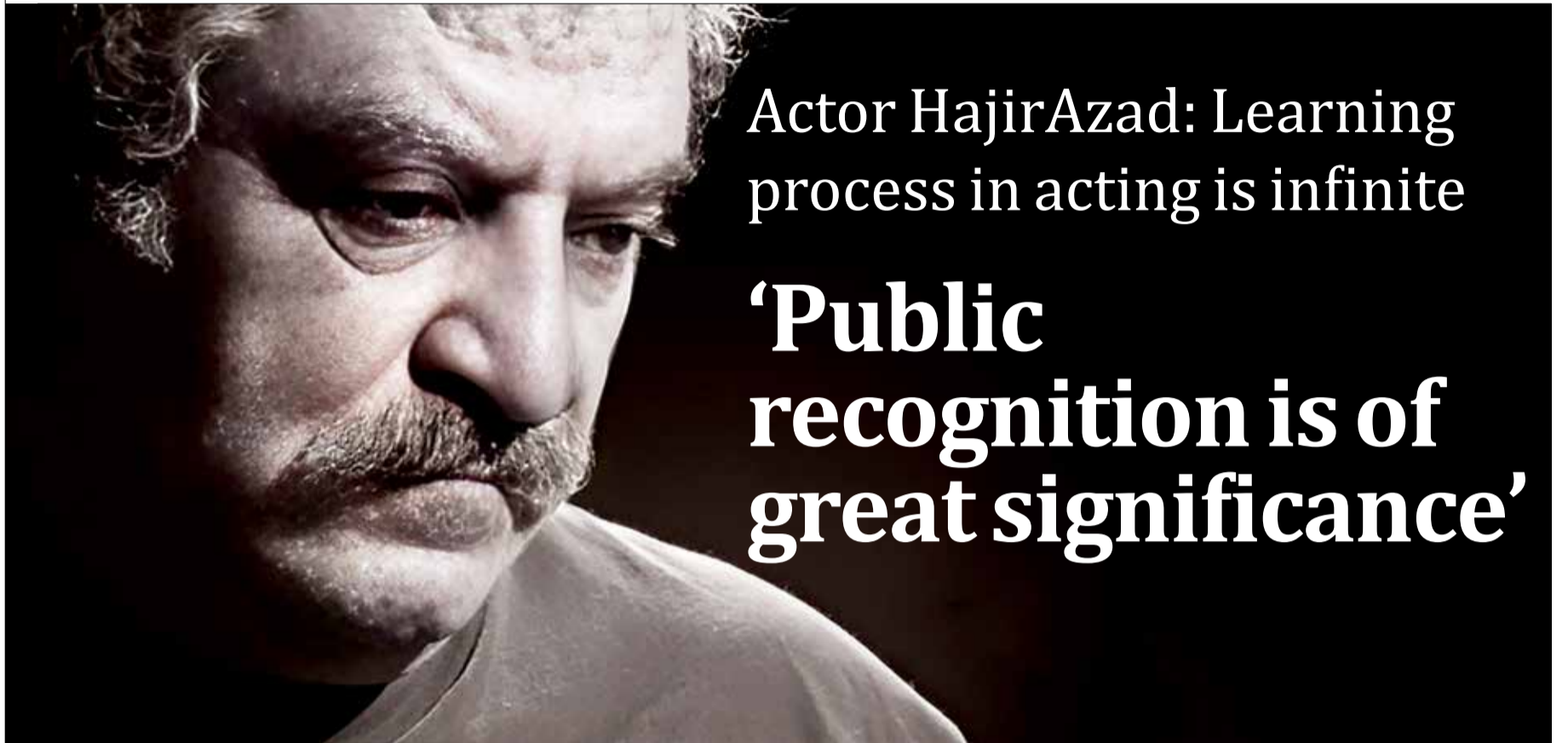
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Actor HajirAzad: Learning process in acting is infinite 'Public recognition is of great significance'



Mahdiah Qazvinian

Staff writer

In the world of Iranian cinema and television, the veteran actor Kazem HajirAzad has left an unforgettable mark through tens of theatrical, cinematic, and television performances. From the theatrical play 'Rostam and Sohrab' to television series like 'The Passenger of Rey,' 'Mokhtarnameh,' and 'Mortal Wound,' he has been a creative actor, although some believe that his talent remains underestimated.

Born on March 21, 1950, in Tehran, HajirAzad began his acting in the theater. At the age of 21, he had his first and last pre-revolutionary TV experience with the three-part 'Rostam and Sohrab' in 1971. His formal training in acting began in 1970, under the guidance of Mostafa Oskoui, focusing on Stanislavski's method. After the Islamic Revolution, he returned to acting with the TV series 'Fresh Air'.

Reflecting on his extensive career, in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, HajirAzad expressed his belief that the learning process in acting is infinite, and there are lots of things he

needs to learn.

He emphasized the challenges of historical roles, such as his character in 'Mokhtarnameh,' requiring a deep understanding of dialogues, lifestyle, and costumes of different eras.

He values pushing his own limits as an actor, seeing it as a beautiful challenge that contributes to an artist's growth.

Despite starting with theater, he prefers cinema and television due to his love for visual storytelling. He believes that being recognized by the audience is of great significance, and any role appreciated by people is valuable for him.

Discussing his recent work, he mentioned his involvement in the series 'Rahil,' currently on TV screens. Among his ongoing projects are 'Breach,' directed by Ali Ghaffari, and another directed by Ida Panah-andeh.

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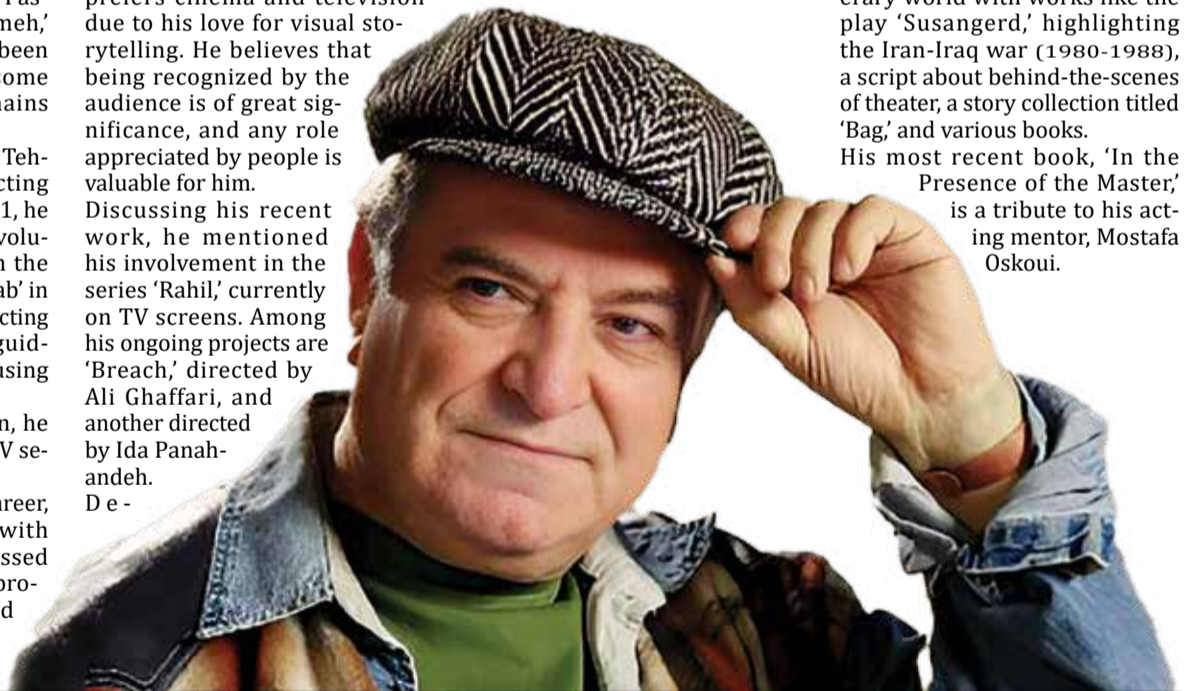
spite a career filled with diverse roles, HajirAzad has rarely played lead roles. Yet, since the 1980s, his face has become known to the audience, particularly after his role in 'Mortal Wound' and 'Mokhtarnameh.'

He stressed that the joy of acting keeps him committed, and retirement is not in his plans as long as he can memorize scripts and perform.

"From the very beginning of my acting career, I have been given serious and challenging roles, but I have a great love for comedy. I had the pleasure of performing in a comedy play, 'God of Carnage,' alongside Elham Pavehnejad and Behnam Tashakkor, in which the audiences burst into laughter," he said.

Away from acting, HajirAzad is a writer, contributing to the literary world with works like the play 'Susangerd,' highlighting the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), a script about behind-the-scenes of theater, a story collection titled 'Bag,' and various books.

His most recent book, 'In the Presence of the Master,' is a tribute to his acting mentor, Mostafa Oskoui.



Berlinale's WCF to finance Iranian director's work

The Berlinale's World Cinema Fund (WCF) is to provide a total of €360,000 in funding for 14 international projects, including one Iranian project.

The WCF will give \$30,000 for the production of Iranian film 'Boomerang,' directed by Shahab Fotouhi, Screen Daily reported.

In its latest funding round, the WCF has recommended production funding for 11 projects and distribution grants for three films. The 14 independent projects hail from Argentina, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Iran, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Belarus, Rwanda, Senegal and Thailand. The production funding recipients include 'Demba' by Senegalese writer-cum-director Mama-

dou Dia, whose feature debut 'Nafi's Father' won the best first feature prize Locarno in 2019, as well as Thai director Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke's 'A Useful Ghost,' which earlier this year received support from the Hubert Bals Fund. Boonbunchachoke participated in Berlinale Talents in 2021.

Also supported is Chilean director Diego Céspedes' feature debut 'The Mysterious Gaze Of The Flamingo' which was presented at the Venice Film Festival's Gap-Financing Market in 2022 and at the 2021 Sundance Producers Summit.

The WCF jury made its selection from 194 submitted projects from a total of 62 countries. The members of its jury are the

documentary film producer and creative advisor Marta Andreu (Spain), the director, screenwriter and producer Ayşe Polat (Germany), film scholar and curator Viola Shafik (Germany / Egypt) and Vincenzo Bugno (Italy / Germany), the head of the WCF. Additionally, the jurors for WCF Africa are the producer, festival director of the Pan-African film festival FESPACO and the Berlin festival Afrikamera, Alex Moussa Sawadogo (Burkina Faso) and the filmmaker and curator Dorothee Wenner (Germany).

Last year, in the 35th jury session of the Berlinale World Cinema Fund (WCF), the juries made 11 funding recommendations for projects from Afghanistan, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Colombia,

Georgia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mongolia, Paraguay, Peru and Vietnam. The funding amounts to a total of €493,000. The WCF is pleased to be able to support independent cinema even more strongly in times of crisis and to promote the visibility of the cultural complexity of our world.

WCF was formed in 2004. It has around €1m a year, with backing from the German Federal Cultural Foundation and the German ministry of foreign affairs, that stretches to support the production and distribution of films from areas of the world with limited filmmaking infrastructure. Since 2014 WCF Europe has helped producers working in the European Union to co-produce with WCF-supported territories.