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# FIMF to benefit Iranian music by focusing on competitiveness: *Official*

Arts & Culture Desk

The secretary of the 40th Fajr International Music Festival said that the festival will benefit the entirety of music in Iran for years to come, provided that it continues to move towards becoming increasingly competitive in various musical genres and interdisciplinary fields related to music.

"I firmly believe that the Fajr International Music Festival, with its two essential facets of 'celebration' and 'competition,' can serve the entirety of music in Iran for many years in both serious aspects," Reza Mahdavi expressed.

He added that the goal will only materialize if the festival persists in enhancing its competitiveness across musical genres and interdisciplinary fields related to music. This will allow for greater participation of young generations in this grand music festival, which is unique on a global scale, thanks to the richness inherent in Iranian music that gets stronger each year, IRNA reported. The 40th Fajr International Music

Festival aims to introduce and honor the outstanding works of Iranian musicians, elevate the art of music, and enhance the taste and listening culture of audiences. It also seeks to safeguard the national identity rooted in Iranian and ritual teachings, strengthen and support creative arts—especially ideas and performances from the younger generation—and identify and solidify the qualitative form and content for various musical genres. The festival will take place from February 12 to February 18 this year, featuring both competitive sections (the Barbad Award) and non-competitive ones centered on national unity.

The call for entries in the competitive section of this festival was announced on October 19, 2024, covering auditory albums with and without lyrics (including traditional, regional, and ethnic music, Western classical, fusion, children's music, Iranian orchestral, and film music), research (music books, theses, and dissertations), performance awards (Western classical music, national music—Dastgah system—[the standard musical system in Persian art music], composition awards (focused on national

unity), music and lyrics, singles, and film music.

In the auditory album section, 33 works were submitted, while 14 works were sent in for research (music books), 10 for theses and dissertations, 39 for composition awards (focused on national unity), 10 for music and lyrics, 39 for music and media, 42 for singles, and 2 for film music.

In the competitive section for stage performances (the Barbad Award), 37 music groups participated in the categories of Western classical music and Iranian classical music. In total, 226 works and music groups entered the competitive section and stage performances for the Barbad Award, with winners in each category being announced during the closing ceremony of the 40th Fajr International Music Festival.

Since the 31st edition of the festival, the Barbad Award has been presented to the winners. This award was omitted during the 34th and 35th editions of the Fajr Music Festival but was reintroduced in the 36th edition in 2020. Previously, a total of 16 Barbad awards



were given in seven categories, which has now expanded to 21.

"Barbad" was the most renowned musician, poet, lute player (on the barbat), and singer of the Sassanid era. He created melodies for each day of the week, known as the "Turuq al-Malookiya." Barbad's legacy continues to live

on in the names of the sections of contemporary Iranian musical modes. For the first time, he created the musical mode known as the "Khosrowani Anthem" and dedicated it to King Khosrow Parviz of the Sassanid dynasty. Most melodies and songs in music are attributed to Barbad.

## Seven movies win Fajr Film Festival's audience votes

Arts & Culture Desk

Seven Iranian films, competing in the Fajr Film Festival, won audience votes on Thursday, the seventh day of the prestigious cinematic event.

The results of the voting for films screened at the festival on February 6 were announced by the selection committee for the audience's favorite film.

The 43rd Fajr Film Festival features the films 'The People's Child,' directed by Mahmoud Karimi; 'Prophet Moses,' directed by Ebrahim Hatamikia, 'Peshmerga' by Ali Ghafari, 'The Catcher in the Rye' directed by Muhammad Reza Kheradmandan, 'Free,' directed by Hesan Farahmand, 'Call Me Ziba,' directed by Rasoul Sadr-Ameli, and 'God of War,' directed by Hossein Darabi.

These seven films are among the 32 entries in the competition that captured the audience's attention. The list of films is presented without priority. The 43rd Fajr Film Festival, directed by Manocher Shahsavari, will continue until February 11. This edition of the festival, featuring a competition of 33 feature films and four animated films, is considered one of the busiest in the event's history.

The jury for the Iranian film competition this year includes Kamal Tabrizi (director), Reza Dorostkar (critic), Alireza Raeisian (director), Alireza Zarrindast (cinematographer), Ezzatollah



Zarghami (cultural manager), and Mastaneh Mohajer (editor and producer).

In this context, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs stated, "In this year's festival, there is only one female filmmaker participating, and this certainly raises a red flag. We need to examine and understand what has led to their limited presence in this edition of the festival." Zahra Behrooz-Azar, during her visit to the Milad Tower Media House for the festival, watched 'Prophet Moses'.

Addressing reporters about the significance of this cinematic event, she said, "One of the most crucial roles of the festival is to create a bridge for artists. The role of an artist is to identify issues within society and represent them, raising awareness and, in many cases, proposing solutions. We need to ensure that we listen to and embrace the voices of experts in addressing these issues. The Fajr Film Festival provides such a platform."

"This year, we are participating in the 'Manifestation of National Will'

award and will present a special award for 'Women and Family.' However, our work will not be confined to the duration of the Fajr Film Festival. We have prepared a special award in collaboration with the Art Deputy of the Ministry of Culture, focused on films related to family and women. Special judges will be appointed for this discussion, and all selected films will be evaluated according to specific protocols. We have also begun a joint collaboration with the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) to work on empowering women in various artistic fields, as well as in selecting subjects and issues, aiming to start from the grassroots level," Behrooz-Azar added.

The vice president emphasized the importance of creating a conducive environment for female artists, stating, "Safety, respect, and attention to the dignity of women are crucial aspects that will allow us to continue witnessing the vibrant participation of women in the arts, as we have in the past."

## Safeguarding wetlands for ...



The trend of unsustainable agricultural development upstream

of wetlands, including those of Bakhtegan, Urmia, and Jazmourian, the number of legal and illegal wells in the wetland basins, the construction of numerous dams and barriers on incoming rivers, and the limited water resources—all contribute to the depletion and drying of these wetlands. Moreover, the state of wetland water resources has faced qualitative challenges due to the influx of pollutants and reduced water quantity.

Given the importance of these valuable ecosystems and the consequences of their drying up, the law prioritizes meeting the minimum environmental water needs of wetlands after drinking water. Unfortunately, due to reasons such as livelihood concerns, fulfilling the water needs of wetlands has not been fully addressed and prioritized.

To address the water shortage and take land use planning into account in water resource-dependent development projects, a review of water allocation and consumption documents to ensure the full allocation of environmental water rights for wetlands and the sustainability of river flows is essential. This can lead to improved conditions for wetlands in river basins and the sustainability of the country's wetland and river basins.

According to the latest studies, 1.5 million hectares of the country's wetlands have turned into sources and centers of dust storms with varying intensities. The most urgent measure to prevent the activation of these sources is to secure the minimum water requirements, alongside preventing the degradation of wetland beds and vegetation, managing livestock grazing in these areas, fostering collaborative protection of these valuable ecosystems with the involvement of all stakeholders and local communities, and most importantly, ensuring sustainable management of water resources and consumption at the watershed level of each wetland.

The Department of Environment views the protection of wetlands not only as aquatic areas but also as regions providing extensive ecological, social, and economic services. Therefore, the ecological conservation of wetlands is a priority for this organization. In this approach, public participation and inter-agency cooperation play crucial roles. "Free flow of information" is one of the key components of this approach to wetland protection. The Department of Environment strives to serve as a bridge between various agencies and the government and the communities living on the edges of wetlands, as well as the general public. The multitude of responsible agencies in this area

sometimes complicates this free flow, but the department is working to resolve these issues, as we believe that the free flow of information invites greater participation and fosters new initiatives and creativity in conservation efforts.

The DoE emphasizes the need for collaborative inter-agency efforts, coherence in policymaking, avoidance of sectoral myopia, meticulous planning, and the implementation of effective and sometimes stringent policies in managing and protecting wetlands. Undoubtedly, one of the most critical factors for success in wetland management is the close cooperation and fruitful interaction between governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as the proper definition and fulfillment of roles by local communities. This has been reflected in the development and implementation of wetland ecosystem management programs, and I hope that with continuous efforts and effective national and international collaborations, we can mitigate the risks facing Iran's wetlands—a task that is indeed very challenging and requires time, resources, and collective will.



According to the findings of recent studies, 1.5 million hectares of Iran's wetlands have become sources and centers of dust storms, with varying intensities. The most critical solution to prevent the activation of these sources is to ensure the minimum water requirements.