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# Iran's National Orchestra to perform in Tehran on August 8

## Arts & Culture Desk

The concert of the Iran's National Orchestra, titled "Golgoon (Blushborne)," led by Homayoun Rahimian and featuring works by prominent Iranian composers, including Hassan Ryiahi and Homayoun Rahimian, will be held in Vahdat Hall of the capital, Tehran, on Friday evening (August 8). In the concert, Amirhossein Samiee and Hossein Alishapour will accompany Iran's National Orchestra as vocalists.

The performance of "Golgoon," centered on national music and utilizing an authentic repertoire, provides another opportunity to hear exquisite Iranian musical works in an orchestral format. Iran's National Orchestra was founded in 1998 by Maestro Farhad Fakhreddini with the aim of performing valuable Iranian orchestral music. The orchestra was established with a balanced combination of Iranian instruments including santur, qanun, a group of tar and tarbass players, oud, and

percussion instruments alongside the instruments of a symphony orchestra. There are over 270 pieces of music in the National Orchestra's repertoire. The orchestra is a subsidiary of the Roudaki Artistic Cultural Foundation and currently operates under the permanent leadership of Homayoun Rahimian. Iran's National Orchestra began its activities this year with an approach of honoring great Iranian musicians and performing their works. The orchestra's first con-

cert, titled "A Memory Lives Within Me," was held on April 21st in honor of Mohammad Sarir, a veteran musician and composer, led by Homayoun Rahimian and with Ali Tafreshi as vocalist, at Vahdat Hall. The second concert of Iran's National Orchestra, titled "A Gaze Linger- ing," featuring works by the late Homayoun Khorram, was also held on June 8 at Vahdat Hall, conducted by Homayoun Rahimian, with Mohammad Abdolhosseini as vocalist and Babak Shahraki performing a violin solo.



## Excavations to continue in Soltaniyeh World Heritage site: *Official*



## Arts & Culture Desk

The director of the Soltaniyeh Dome, a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Iranian province of Zanjan, announced the continuation of a new round of excavations in the Abwab-al-Bar area with the aim of identifying Ilkhanid architecture and re-reading historical structures. "According to historical texts, Oljeitu, the eighth Mongol Ilkhan, built a tomb for himself at the same time as the construction of the new capital of the Ilkhanid government in Soltaniyeh, which is known today as Soltaniyeh Dome or Ali

Mansion. Following the actions of his brother, Ghazan Khan, in Tabriz, and at the recommendation of Iranian ministers, he established a complex of public welfare buildings called Abwab-al-Bar next to this dome and within the citadel," Abolfazl Aali said in an interview with ISNA. Pointing to historical sources, he added, "Abwab-al-Bar included 19 buildings with various functions, which, as a charitable foundation with a specific administrative structure and independent budget, provided services to the residents of the capital and travelers. However, precise information about the location of these buildings and their architectural structure is not mentioned in historical texts, and this has provided an incentive for new excavations." Aali underlined that the directorate of Soltaniyeh World Heritage site, with the aim of increasing knowledge about the structure of Abwab-al-Bar

and the buildings around the dome, began excavations in the eastern and western sides of the dome in August, and said, "In this phase, the focus is on determining the enclosure around the dome, the entrances, and how this complex connects with other parts of the historical Soltaniyeh citadel." According to the director of the Soltaniyeh Dome, in continuation of the research, considering previous findings in the 1970s and also excavations in the 1980s and 1990s on the eastern side of the dome, another goal of the new excavations is to re-identify and interpret the works and results of past excavations. "In this season of excavations, significant results have been obtained on the western side of the dome, and a part of the spaces adjacent to the dome belonging to the Ilkhanid period, along with traces from subsequent periods, have been identified," Aali added.

## 'Dandelions Girl' heads to South Korea; 'The Plain Sings' to Italy

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian short film 'Dandelions Girl,' written and directed by Azadeh Masihzadeh and produced by Razi-eh Gholami, was introduced as one of the selected works in the international short film competition section of the 13th Seoul International Children's Film Festival (SICFF). The festival, one of Asia's most prestigious cinematic events in the field of children's films, will be held in Seoul from September 10 to 17, 2025. The film 'Dandelions Girl' will be screened at the prestigious event and evaluated by the jury alongside other prominent cinematic works from around the world. 'Dandelions Girl' tells the story of a girl who enters the boys' world of football and, through her perseverance on the field, disrupts the balance of power. With a metaphorical look at the confrontation between truth and lies, the movie depicts the honesty of the young generation and their resistance against power. The short film stars Tara Soroush, Benyam Afrangah, and Abdollah Bahadori. Moreover, the short film 'The Plain Sings,' written and directed by Gita Feizi and produced by Diman Zandi, has been selected for the competition section of the 31st Della Lessina Festival in Italy. Founded in 1995, the Della Lessina Film Festival initially focused solely on the topic of the Lessini Mountains, but the scope of the festival gradually expanded and eventually encompassed mountains worldwide and their unifying theme, namely works that narrate the stories of life, history, and mountain traditions. The festival will be held from August 22 to 31, 2025 in Italy.



The synopsis of 'The Plain Sings' states, "Amidst the daily routines of a shepherd girl's life, a wolf attacks the flock. This attack leads to an important decision for her." Darya Kakaei, Afshin Khedri, Sara Ahmadnejad, and Saman Saed Moocheshi have acted in the film. 'The Plain Sings' has previously won awards from the 31st Thalmässing Festival in Germany, the main award for Best Film at the 26th Yuki International Film Festival in Austria, the Grand Prize at the 20th Early Bird Film Festival in Bulgaria, two awards for Best Film in Kurdish and Best Mitosfilm Short Film at the 14th Berlin Kurdish Film Festival, the Best Film award in the Invisible Lands section at the 4th Son of a Pitch Film Festival in Italy, and the Best Music award at the 20th Nahal Festival, and has participated in the Sehsuechte Festival in Germany (54th edition), Kurdish London (14th edition), Sakarya (10th edition), Kaaffilm (3rd edition), and Abbas Kiarostami and ISFA festivals.

## Inventive instruments; a failed experiment in Iranian music

Iranian music, with its ancient history and enduring traditions, has always faced the challenge of limited tonal color and sonic range of its instruments. These limitations, especially in the bass register, have led musicians and instrument makers to invent new instruments; instruments that promised to expand the sonic range and bring innovation to Iranian orchestras. But now, more than a decade after the introduction of many of these inventive instruments, the fundamental question is: what has become of these innovations and these inventive instruments? The discussion of inventive instruments has flourished in Iranian music for about twenty years. In all eras, instrument makers have tried to invent and innovate instruments, but with the entry of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, the master of Iranian singing, into the field of instrument making

and the unveiling of his inventive instruments, a new chapter of innovation in Iranian instruments began. In the mid-2000s, Shajarian, citing that due to his round-the-clock activity and numerous concert performances, he was more aware than anyone of the lack of bass sound in music, made several innovations in instrument making. From Sorahi and Shah-Sorahi to Bam-Sorahi, Shahrashoob, Shahrashoob Alto, Bam-Saz, Shahnavaaz, Shahbang, Kereshmeh, Barbad, Tondar, Saghar, Saboo Soprano, Del and Del Alto, Del and Del Soprano. These instruments were initially welcomed in "Shahnaz" group concerts and specialized exhibitions, creating great hope among music lovers. However, contrary to expectations, these instruments never entered other orchestras or various albums beyond Master Shajarian's works and gradually fell into



oblivion. No mass production of these instruments took place, and the made versions did not remain in the hands of musicians. Among other inventive instruments that have received special attention in Iranian music is the "Shorangiz" instrument; an instrument that is mostly associated with the name of Hossein Alizadeh. Alizadeh has used this instru-

ment in many of his concerts and solo performances, but it should be noted that Shorangiz was originally invented by Ebrahim Ghanbari-Mehr, a veteran master and one of the prominent figures in Iranian instrument making. It is said that this instrument was designed at the suggestion of Ali Tajvidi with the aim of providing a deeper bass sound than the Setar;

the bowl of this instrument is also close to the Tanbour in terms of size and shape. It is no secret that Iranian instruments have many shortcomings. Such as frequent tuning changes with slight temperature changes, and the unsuitability of performing with skin instruments in humid areas, which has given the most motivation to innovators to overcome these shortcomings, and they have often had successful experiences. Such as the invention of special tuning pegs that prevent the tuning from loosening and the creation of artificial skins for percussion instruments. Also, due to the limitation of the Santour instrument for performing all modes of Iranian music, Santours have been invented that change tuning instantly with movable frets similar to the Qanun, which simplifies performance for the musician in large orchestras or practices.

Despite all the requirements expressed by undisputed music masters for the sonic range of Iranian music and the need for new instruments, and despite the fact that renowned masters such as Ghanbari-Mehr, Shajarian, Alizadeh, and others have embarked on this path, it seems that the experiment of inventing new instruments in Iranian music has currently failed; because none of the long list of instrument names mentioned are in the hands of active musicians and students, and not only have they not reached mass production, but some of them have only one version made. Considering that an instrument must ultimately be in the hands of musicians and accepted by them, almost no inventive instrument has had such a fate.

*The full article, penned by Ata Navidi, first appeared in Persian on Khabaronline.*