



18th youth music festival kicks off

Minister calls festival, bridge between ‘ancient heritage, new creations’

Arts & Culture Desk

18th National Festival of Youth Music Festival opened Tuesday at Tehran's Roudaki Hall, drawing 1,640 young musicians competing across traditional Persian, regional folk, Western classical and composition categories through September 17. The competition serves as an artistic testing ground for evaluating the country's music education standards while spurring greater effort among budding musicians, according to festival organizers. This year's event carries a budget of nearly \$60,000, doubling last year's allocation.

Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi praised the festival as bridging "ancient heritage and new creations," calling it proof that art remains "the language of solidarity and future-building in Iran."

Deputy Minister for Artistic Affairs Nadereh Rezaei told contestants they represent "Iran's unparalleled musical treasures." The opening day spotlighted Azerbaijani regional music.

Competition proved fierce during preliminary rounds held from August 6 through early September. From the initial pool, 217 contestants advanced in traditional

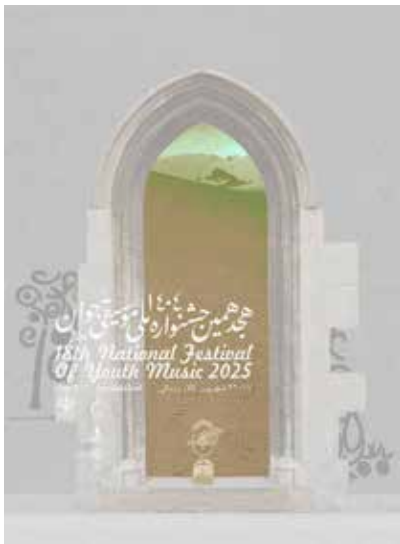
Persian music, 272 in regional categories and 116 in Western classical sections. Ninety-two judges evaluated submissions across all disciplines.

Winners will walk away with substantial rewards beyond recognition. First-place finishers receive \$1,440, second place \$1,200 and third place \$960. The festival secretariat also plans to produce 20 documentary films featuring performer highlights.

Officials aim to broaden the festival's reach by broadcasting select performances on state television. Support for winners includes master classes with distinguished instructors and formation of musical ensembles spanning regional, traditional and classical genres.

The Iran Music Association organized the event with backing from the Culture Ministry's music office and artistic affairs department. Age groups range from 15-18 years for contestants born between 2006-2009, 19-23 years for those born 2001-2005, and 24-29 years covering births from 1995-2000.

Festival director Hamidreza Ardalan oversees programming that encompasses Persian classical traditions, regional folk styles from across Iran's diverse provinces, Western classical repertoire



and original compositions.

The competition format reflects international standards for musical contests, requiring adherence to specific rules and protocols. Organizers stressed that participants should maintain motivation regardless of outcomes, noting that when over 100 contestants compete in single instrument categories, mathematical reality limits winners.



Regional sections showcase Iran's musical diversity, from Azarbaijan's distinctive sounds to Kurdish, Mazandaran, Lorestan, Khorasan, Kermanshah, Golestan and southern coastal traditions. Western classical categories span guitar, violin, viola, cello, brass and woodwind instruments, recorder and piano. Eighty-eight artists serve as judges across various specialties, bringing de-

cadés of performance and teaching experience to evaluations. The secretariat implemented multiple safeguards to ensure fairness and accuracy in assessments.

Festival organizers expressed gratitude to all participants who submitted works, emphasizing that the primary goal remains elevating musical quality and enriching the art form rather than merely securing contest rankings.

Persian music heir Shajarian to take classical vocals to Tehran streets



Persian classical vocalist Homayoun Shajarian speaks during a press conference in Tehran on September 1, 2025.

● MEHR

Arts & Culture Desk

Renowned Persian classical vocalist Homayoun Shajarian announced he will perform a free street concert at Tehran's Azadi Square on September 5, marking the first time in years he has secured permits for an outdoor public performance in Iran's capital.

The son of legendary Persian master Mohammad Reza Shajarian said the evening concert represents the fulfillment of a "years-long dream" to bring traditional music directly to the streets, ISNA reported.

Officials from multiple government agencies have signed off on the unprecedented event, which could pave the way for similar performances by other Iranian artists.

Speaking at a news conference, Sha-

jarian said the show will kick off at 10 p.m. to minimize disruption to city traffic. The performance will feature the 30-member Siavash Orchestra and run without restrictions or prohibitions, he emphasized.

"We've been chasing this opportunity for eight years," Shajarian told reporters. The singer acknowledged that staging the concert poses greater challenges than mounting "10 regular concerts" due to logistics and sound equipment needs for the open-air venue.

The multi-billion rial production will include state-of-the-art audio systems to reach audiences potentially standing blocks away from the main stage. Shajarian said he will waive his per-

formance fee, though orchestra members will receive standard compensation.

The concert will open with 'Diar-e Asheghan' (The Homeland of My Loves) and close with 'Morph-e Sahar' (Bird of Dawn), featuring pieces from Shajarian's recent repertoire that audiences know by heart.

Sahar Forouzan, Shajarian's program manager, said they had initially explored staging the concert at Azadi Sports Complex or the ancient ruins of Persepolis.

The singer voiced hopes that Tehran will increasingly hear "music instead of car horns" as cultural programming expands throughout the city. He stressed the concert operates in-

dependently of any political organization.

The performer also revealed that over 300 unreleased works by his late father remain in archives, with plans to release them in collections of ten. Mohammad Reza Shajarian, who died in 2020, is widely considered the most influential Persian classical vocalist of the modern era.

Standing room only tickets remain free, with no reservations required. Organizers plan online streaming for those unable to attend in person.

"If my father were alive today, he would take tremendous pride in the people of his country," Shajarian said, reflecting on his father's enduring legacy among Iranian music lovers.

French festival awards Iranian short film poster

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Leyli Rasouli's short 'Corps Are Not Buried with Knives' unveiled its official poster as the work clinched the Best Poster award at the Greenflash International Film Festival in France.

The drama, written and directed by Rasouli and produced by Ali Kalhor, follows the journey of Shirin, a young woman searching for her missing brother. Along the way she encounters "tragic" events that alter her life. The film casts

a spotlight on family ties and personal crises through what the director calls a realistic and human lens, IRNA wrote.

The cast includes Pouya Beigi, Rasouli herself, Keyvan Azad, Milad Safavi, Reza Barzan, Amirmansour Monfared and Hamidreza Nouri.

The award comes as Iranian independent cinema continues to gain recognition abroad, often praised for its pared-down storytelling and focus on intimate social themes. Rasouli described the poster launch and the French honor as a milestone,



saying it reflects the film's "spirit and depth."

Spox: No legal ban on women receiving motorcycle license

Social Desk

Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Tuesday there is no legal restriction on issuing motorcycle licenses to women, citing the presidential legal affairs office, though current law still limits the permits to men. She told reporters at her weekly briefing at the Ministry of Cooperatives Labour and Social Welfare that the government had not drafted any bill on the matter because it sees no legal barrier to licensing women. A previous parliamentary proposal, she added, had failed to

advance.

"Our country has many capable women who skillfully operate everything from tractors in rural areas to aircraft, buses and heavy vehicles," Mohajerani said, stressing the administration would welcome a resolution to what she called a problem.

Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs Zahra Behrouz-Azar said on August 31 that the government believes no new law is needed for women to ride motorcycles and that inter-agency coordination was under way.

"Women's motorcycling is no different from their work as pi-

lots or drivers. We already see women active in national, international and aviation transport, and it is natural they need motorcycles for daily mobility," Behrouz-Azar said, adding that legal reviews had been carried out since the start of the current administration.

She emphasized that existing regulations are sufficient and that implementation only requires cooperation among authorities. Behrouz-Azar also noted safety concerns, saying women tend to drive cautiously and use helmets, which she said could improve road safety overall.