



FARHANG
FOUNDATION

Annual Report
2025–2026



FARHANG
FOUNDATION

is a nonreligious, nonpolitical, and
nonprofit foundation dedicated to
celebrating Iranian art and culture for
the benefit of the community at large.

Areas of Focus



Constituencies

Trustees, Council Members, Advisers & Supporters

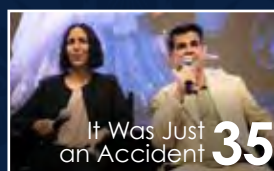
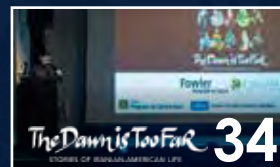
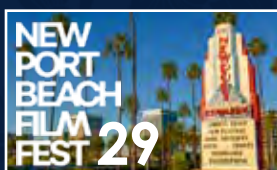
Iranians, Iranophiles, and Iran Scholars who support the mission of Farhang Foundation and our programs by donating their time, knowledge, and financial support.

Iranian Americans

These are the custodians of one of the richest cultures in the world, who benefit from learning more about their art and culture. They are also the individuals who will later be our cultural ambassadors to the community at large.

Community at Large

We feel that Iranian art and culture can contribute positively and should be woven into the multicolored tapestry of great cultures that compose America. That's why our mission at Farhang Foundation is to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large.





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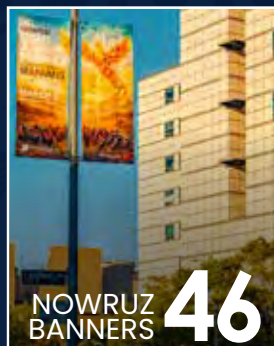
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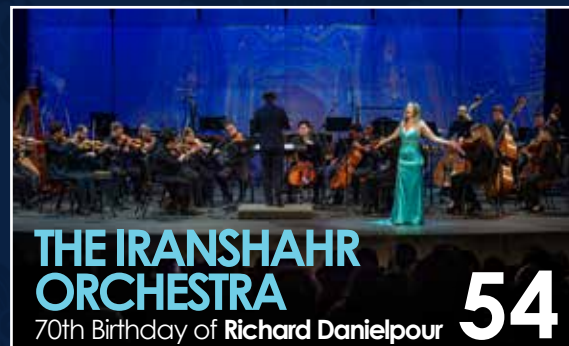
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Letter from the Chairman, Farhad Mohit: Farhang's 18th Year

Dorood! As I reflect on another year as Chairman of Farhang Foundation, I am filled with gratitude for the extraordinary artists, supporters, and partners who bring our mission to life.

At Farhang Foundation we work every day on our amazing mission to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large. For many of us Iranians in the diaspora, freedom means choosing Iranian culture as a way to enrich our lives and make us better humans. As I frequently say, "Being culturally Iranian makes me a better American." Through our music, literature, cinema, and traditions, we offer opportunities for our friends and neighbors to also experience the depth and hospitality of the Iranian culture we choose to practice.

This past year, this mission continued to bring people together across the United States and through digital programs reach audiences around the globe. In a year marked by both continued artistic and cultural triumphs and profound sorrow for the Iranian community, such connections are especially meaningful.

Expanding Our Reach: Building on New Foundations

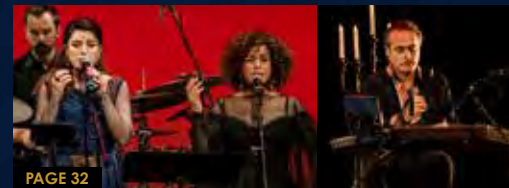
Following Farhang's historic debut in Northern California last year, we continued to deepen our connections with Bay Area audiences and cultural institutions in 2026.

Our inaugural **Celebration of Iranian Cinema at Stanford**, presented in partnership with the **Stanford Hamid and Christina Moghadam**



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Program in Iranian Studies and the **UCLA Film & Television Archive**, brought contemporary Iranian cinema to new audiences. Screenings of *Tatami*, *The Witness*, and *Seven Days*, alongside award-winning shorts from the Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival, reflected the powerful storytelling and diverse perspectives of Iranian filmmakers.



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In San Francisco, we presented the premiere of **Voices Unveiled** at Cowell Theater at the **Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture**. Composed and produced by **Ehsan Matoori** and featuring the remarkable voices of **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina Deris**, this moving performance explored Iranian women's stories through traditional, folk, and contemporary music.

Our collaboration with the **Asian Art Museum** of San Francisco further strengthened Farhang's presence in Northern California. Together, we presented a Nowruz program featuring music by **Ehsan Matoori** and **Greg Ellis**, dance by **Miriam Peretz**, Persian calligraphy by **Arash Shirinbab**,

short film screenings, and a beautiful Haft-Sin display. These partnerships affirm our commitment to sharing Iranian culture with communities throughout California and beyond.

Honoring Nowruz: Light Always Prevails

At the core of our cultural calendar stands Nowruz, a celebration of renewal, beauty, and unity. This year, amid the ongoing loss of innocent lives in Iran, we made the difficult decision to cancel our annual outdoor Nowruz Festival at UCLA. Our observance of the New Year became an opportunity to honor the grief of our community while drawing strength from the enduring voices of Iranian artists.



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On March 8, 2026, Farhang presented **NOWRUZ: Light Always Prevails—Honoring the Enduring Voices of Iranians** at UCLA's historic Royce Hall. Presented in partnership with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** and the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music**, the evening featured a rare performance by the incomparable **Parissa**, the Persian-language debut of acclaimed soprano **Golda Zahra**, and the **Iranshahr Orchestra** under the direction of Maestro **Shahab Paranj**. Through music, we came together in reflection, resilience, and cultural solidarity.



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In Orange County, our long-standing partnership with **Pacific Symphony** continued through **NOWRUZ: Echoes of Freedom—In Honor of the Enduring Voices of Iranians**. Conducted by

Maestro **Carl St.Clair**, with the return of Maestro **Shardad Rohani**, the concert featured **Babak Amini**, **Cameron Shahbazi**, **Sara Hamidi** in her US stage debut, and dancers **Tara Ghassemieh** and **Vitor Luiz**. The evening embodied the expressive power of Iranian artistry and the strength of our shared heritage.

Beyond the concert hall, our Grand Haft-Sin installation at **Westfield Century City**, designed by **Paris Rezaie** of **Maison de La Fork**, introduced visitors to the beauty and symbolism of Nowruz. Our annual street banners in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills carried the message "Light Always Prevails," offering a visible expression of cultural pride, remembrance, and hope.

A Year of Extraordinary Cinema

Farhang Foundation continued to champion Iranian cinema through long-standing partnerships and special opportunities for audiences to engage directly with filmmakers.



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As the sole sponsor of the annual **UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema**, we have always been honored to support this longest-running series in the world dedicated to Iranian cinema, a program featuring contemporary films from Iran and the diaspora, award-winning short films, and a special tribute to the legendary Dariush Mehrjui. The series reflected the humanism, imagination, and artistic excellence that have made Iranian cinema so deeply resonant around the world.

At USC, we celebrated the Academy Award®-winning animated short **In the Shadow of the Cypress** with a screening and conversation featuring filmmakers **Hossein Molayemi** and **Shirin Sohani**, moderated by **Mark Amin**. We also presented the Los Angeles premieres of *Tatami* and *The Dawn Is Too Far*, inviting audiences to

explore stories of personal freedom, identity, and the Iranian American experience.



A particularly memorable occasion was the Los Angeles premiere of **Jafar Panahi's Palme d'Or-winning film *It Was Just an Accident***, presented in partnership with NEON. Panahi's rare in-person appearance and conversation with **Paul Malcolm** of the UCLA Film & Television Archive offered audiences a remarkable encounter with one of world cinema's most important voices.

Our eleventh consecutive year of collaboration with AFI brought *1001 Frames*, *Divine Comedy*, and *Honeyjoon* to **AFI FEST**. In Orange County, our partnership with the **Newport Beach Film Festival** featured *Cutting Through Rocks* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

Meanwhile, the **16th Annual Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Awards Ceremony** at the **Wallis Annenberg Center** celebrated emerging filmmakers with more than \$33,000 in awards. Honoring these artists and sharing their work remains an essential investment in the future of Iranian storytelling.

Preserving Musical Heritage and Inspiring New Generations

Music has always been at the heart of Farhang Foundation's mission. This year, our collaboration with UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music and the Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music continued to bring performance, scholarship, and education together.

The **Annual Music of Iran Concert** showcased students, instructors, and professional musicians performing works by influential Iranian composers across generations. Under the direction of **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, **Ensemble Iran** demonstrated the depth of our musical traditions and the promise of the young artists carrying them forward.

Our music lecture and conference programs explored the groundbreaking career of Sadeh Nojouki and honored the lasting contributions of Jalil Shahnaz and Hormoz Farhat. A special tribute to Maestro Ahmad Pejman brought together musical performances and personal reflections celebrating his extraordinary legacy.

We also celebrated **Richard Danielpour's 70th birthday** with a free public concert featuring the Iranshahr Orchestra and distinguished guest artists. Together, these programs affirmed Farhang's commitment to honoring our cultural masters while creating opportunities for new generations to learn, perform, and contribute.

Traditions Celebrated: The 13th Annual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda

Farhang closed 2025 with one of its most cherished traditions, the **13th Annual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda**. Presented with the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music at Schoenberg Hall, this sold-out evening honored the longest night of the year through music, poetry, storytelling, and dance.



The program featured the return of Ehsan Matoori's ***Voices Unveiled***, with **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina Deris**, alongside the evocative storytelling of **Gordafarid** and a graceful dance performance by Tara Pandeya. Their artistry brought fresh expression to an ancient tradition, reminding us of the joy and connection found in gathering around our shared cultural heritage.

Literature, Learning, and a Global Community

Farhang's dedication to scholarship and storytelling continued through our expanding digital offerings.

The **Farhang Literature** series welcomed **Adib Khorram** to discuss ***Darius the Great Is Not Okay*** and **Porochista Khakpour** to discuss ***Tehrangles***, both in conversation with **Abdi Nazemian**. These engaging discussions explored belonging, identity, and the many dimensions of Iranian American life.

Through **Farhang Connect**, audiences joined conversations with **Leila Heller** and **Naz Deravian** about food, memory, and family traditions, and with **Y.Z. Kami**, **Dr. Fereshteh Daftari**, and **Dr. Robert Storr** about the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of Kami's art. Our UC Santa Barbara Iranian Studies Lecture Series featured **Dr. Farzin Vajdani** and **Dr. Pamela Karimi**, offering thoughtful perspectives on Iranian history, society, and artistic expression.

Online, Farhang Performances continued to share Iranian music and creativity across borders. This year's offerings included works by **Sima Bina**, **Cameron Shahbazi**, **Mahdieh Mohammadkhani**, **Maliheh Moradi**, and **Amirali Kamali**, among others. With 104 episodes to date and more than **sixteen million views** across over **fifty countries**, the series has become a vital connection between Iranian artists and a worldwide audience.

Closer to home, **Persian 101**, our free Persian Language and Culture After-School Program, continued its commitment to education. Since its launch in 2015, more than 3,500 students throughout Southern California have enrolled in the program. Introducing children to our language and culture is an investment in a heritage that will continue to grow with them.

Building Bridges Through Community and Culture

From ***Iran Through Books*** at the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books** to **Festival Beverly Hills**, Farhang continued to create welcoming opportunities for the broader community to experience Iranian culture.

This year also brought two wonderful new collaborations. **SmorgasJOON**, presented with Smorgasburg in Downtown Los Angeles, celebrated Iranian Angeleno culture through



food, music, dance, calligraphy, and artisan vendors. Our first **Mehregan Family Festival** at the **Bowers Museum** in Santa Ana offered families a free day of performances, creative workshops, and activities celebrating love, gratitude, and kindness.

These gatherings reflect the spirit of Farhang: people coming together to share what they love, discover something new, and find connection through culture.

Looking Ahead

As I reflect on this remarkable year, I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees, Council Members, Executive Team, and volunteers, as well as the artists, donors, members, and partners whose dedication makes this work possible.

Our sold-out 14th Annual Fundraising Gala brought that generosity into focus, gathering supporters whose contributions sustain Farhang's programs. Their commitment and the support of our entire community allow us to continue sharing Iranian culture locally and globally.

As we look to the future, my vision remains to deepen our collaborations with outstanding cultural institutions, amplify Iranian voices across digital platforms, and engage younger generations in sustaining our cultural legacy.

The story of Farhang Foundation is, at its heart, the story of a community coming together in love, creativity, and pride for our shared heritage. Together, we will continue to build bridges through art, honor the voices of Iranian creators, and share the beauty of our culture with the world.

Ba Sepas,

Chair, Farhang Foundation



IRAN

THROUGH BOOKS

Los Angeles Times FESTIVAL OF BOOKS AT USC

On April 26 & 27, 2025, Farhang Foundation returned to the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books** with **Iran Through Books**, a curated literary showcase highlighting Iranian voices across fiction, nonfiction, poetry, art, history, and culinary writing. Hosted at one of the nation's largest literary gatherings, the Farhang Foundation's booth welcomed thousands of visitors and featured guest appearances and book signings by acclaimed authors and scholars including **Dr. Houri Berberian**, **Dr. Talinn Grigor**, **Porochista Khakpour**, **Abdi Nazemian**, **Omid Roustaei**, and **Mandana Zandian**. Through direct engagement with writers and their work, **Iran Through Books** fostered cross-cultural dialogue and offered festivalgoers an expansive view of Iranian history, identity, creativity, and lived experience.









UCLA Celebration of IRANIAN CINEMA

UCLA
FILM &
TELEVISION
ARCHIVE



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Farhang Foundation proudly served as the sole sponsor of the annual **UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema**, presented June 14–29, 2025, at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Organized by the **UCLA Film & Television Archive**, the multiday series now in its thirty-fifth year featured a curated selection of feature-length and short films from Iran and the Iranian diaspora, including **Reading Lolita in Tehran** by Eran Riklis, **Opponent** by Milad Alami, **Seven Days** by Ali Samadi Ahadi, **The Witness** by Nader Saeivar (cowritten with Jafar Panahi), **The Old Bachelor** by Oktay Baraheni, **Celluloid Underground** by Ehsan Khoshbakht, and **The Siren** by Sepideh Farsi. The program also included the 2025

Academy Award–winning animated short **In the Shadow of the Cypress** by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani, as well as award-winning short films from the 2024 Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival. A special two-evening tribute honored the life and legacy of legendary Iranian filmmaker **Dariush Mehrjui** with screenings of **Leila**, **Hamoon**, and **The Pear Tree**. Featuring appearances by acclaimed artists such as **Zar Amir**, **Vishka Asayesh**, and **Shohreh Aghdashloo**, the celebration highlighted the humanism, resilience, and artistic excellence of Iranian cinema while reinforcing Farhang Foundation's commitment to amplifying Iranian voices through film.



FESTIVAL BEVERLY HILLS



Farhang Foundation proudly served as the sole sponsor of Iranian programming at **Festival Beverly Hills 2025**, held on July 20, 2025, at Beverly Gardens Park in the **City of Beverly Hills**. As part of this globally inspired art and performance festival, Farhang presented a vibrant showcase of Iranian music, dance, and culinary traditions to thousands of attendees. The program featured a live performance by the **Kooban Ensemble**, led by music director **Vandad Massahzadeh**, presenting a musical journey through Iran's diverse regional traditions, alongside classical Iranian dance performances by choreographer and artistic director **Melieka Fathi**. The celebration also highlighted Iranian culinary excellence with **Chef Mojdeh Eghbal's NOUSH** gourmet food truck and artisanal Iranian-inspired ice cream by **Kinrose Creamery**. Through this dynamic, multidisciplinary presence, Farhang Foundation contributed to the festival's mission of cross-cultural exchange while celebrating the richness and diversity of Iranian culture in a highly visible public setting. We are grateful to the City of Beverly Hills for their commitment in showcasing the city's diversity and multicultural landscape.





As part of the **UCLA Iranian Music Conference Series**, Farhang Foundation partnered with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** and the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music** to present **In Conversation with Sadegh Nojouki** on April 29, 2025, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall. Moderated by composer and scholar **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, the program explored Nojouki's groundbreaking career, his role in shaping modern Iranian popular music, and his distinctive fusion of traditional Persian melodies with Western orchestration. The evening offered audiences rare insight into Nojouki's artistic legacy and the evolution of Iranian music across generations, underscoring Farhang Foundation's commitment to preserving and celebrating Iranian musical heritage through dialogue and live cultural engagement.

UCLA IRANIAN MUSIC
LECTURE SERIES

IN CONVERSATION WITH SADEGH NOJOUKI

Moderated by Dr. Shahab Paranj

Gramian-Emrani Center
for Iranian Music

UCLA Herb Alpert
School of Music

FARHANG
FOUNDATION





Los Angeles Premiere

Farhang Foundation hosted the Los Angeles premiere of **Tatami** on June 20, 2025, in Los Angeles, marking a significant moment for Iranian and international cinema. Codirected by Academy Award winner **Guy Nattiv** and Cannes Award-winning actress and filmmaker **Zar Amir**, the film is inspired by real-life events and represents a rare and historic collaboration between Iranian and Israeli filmmakers. The screening celebrated Tatami's powerful exploration of resistance, identity, and personal freedom, while highlighting the artistic achievements of its creators. Through this premiere, Farhang Foundation continued its commitment to supporting bold storytelling and amplifying Iranian voices within global cinematic conversations.

THE ANNUAL MUSIC OF IRAN CONCERT AT UCLA

Presented in collaboration with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music**, the free **Annual Music of Iran Concert** took place on May 4, 2025, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall and showcased performances by students enrolled in UCLA's Iranian Music program alongside their instructors and distinguished professional musicians. Directed by composer and director of the Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music, **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, **Ensemble Iran** performed works by influential Iranian composers spanning multiple generations, including Darvish Khān, Ali Akbar Sheida, Hossein Alizadeh, Parviz Meshkatian, Bijan Kamkar, and Paranj himself. The concert highlighted the depth and continuity of Iran's musical traditions while demonstrating the program's commitment to education, performance, and cultural preservation. Through this annual collaboration, Farhang Foundation continues to support academic excellence and the transmission of Iranian musical heritage to new generations of performers and audiences.



IN THE SHADOW OF THE CYPRESS



Presented by Farhang Foundation in collaboration with **USC's Persian American Creative Studies** and **Persian Student Organization**, **In the Shadow of the Cypress** was screened on May 22, 2025, at Joyce J. Cammilleri Hall at the University of Southern California. The special program celebrated the 2024 Academy Award-winning animated short film with an exclusive screening followed by a live conversation with filmmakers **Hossein Molayemi** and **Shirin Sohani**,



moderated by acclaimed producer and director **Mark Amin**. The evening offered audiences a rare opportunity to engage directly with the creators behind the film and explore its powerful storytelling, innovative animation, and deeply human themes. Through this event, Farhang Foundation continued its commitment to supporting Iranian cinema and creating meaningful spaces for dialogue between artists and audiences.



SMORGASJOON

A CELEBRATION OF IRANIAN ANGELENO CULTURE THROUGH FOOD, ART, AND MORE

Farhang Foundation marked its first-ever collaboration with **Smorgasburg**, America's largest weekly outdoor food festival, by presenting **SmorgasJOON: A Celebration of Iranian Angeleno Culture** on August 10, 2025, at Row in Downtown Los Angeles. The one-day, free, open-air festival brought together food, music, art, and shopping to celebrate the vibrant cultural heritage of Iranian Angelenos in an inclusive and highly visible public setting. The program featured music curated by **KCRW's DJ Nassir Nassirzadeh**, Iranian dance performances by **Doran Dance**, and live Persian calligraphy demonstrations

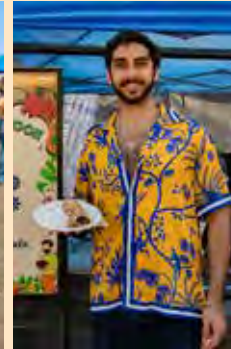
by artist **Mohtadi Mirak**. Festivalgoers enjoyed an expansive selection of Iranian food and beverage vendors, including **Chef Mojdeh** and **NOUSH**, **Kinrose Creamery**, **SAFFRONIQ**, **DarBar Bakery**, **Kouzeh Bakery**, **Mashti Malone's**, **Meymuni Café**, and **Shams Gold USA**, alongside artisan vendors such as **Diyar Concept Store**, **Namisanati Fine Perfumery**, and **Shamad**. Through this inaugural partnership with Smorgasburg, Farhang Foundation expanded its reach to new audiences while celebrating contemporary Iranian culture through community-driven, accessible cultural experiences.



SMORGASBURG



FARHANG
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ART₂ IRAN ایران

CURATORIAL COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION

Building on the success of the inaugural **Art Iran Curatorial Competition and Exhibition**, Farhang Foundation, in partnership with **Craft Contemporary**, launched the open call for **Art Iran 2: Curatorial Competition and Exhibition** in 2025, inviting curators and arts professionals to submit proposals for a focused, thematic group exhibition centered on Iranian art and culture. Announced on July 16, 2025, at Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles, the open call marked the beginning of a competitive curatorial process leading toward an exhibition scheduled to be presented at the museum from May 21 through November 14, 2027. The

competition attracted international attention and was evaluated by a distinguished jury of leading curators, artists, and cultural leaders, including **Ladan Akbarnia** (the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge), **Naz Cuguoğlu** (Asian Art Museum), **Fereshteh Daftari** (formerly MoMA), **Frida Cano** (Craft Contemporary), **Shulamit Nazarian** (Nazarian / Curcio), **Shirin Neshat**, and **Ed Schad** (the Broad). With submissions accepted through November 17, 2025, Art Iran 2 reaffirmed Farhang Foundation's commitment to supporting curatorial research, elevating contemporary Iranian artistic discourse, and fostering long-term institutional collaborations.



LADAN AKBARNIA



NAZ CUGUOĞLU



FERESHTEH DAFTARI



FRIDA CANO



SHULAMIT NAZARIAN



SHIRIN NESHAT



ED SCHAD

Celebration of IRANIAN CINEMA At Stanford

Farhang Foundation expanded the reach of its Iranian cinema programming by presenting the inaugural **Celebration of Iranian Cinema at Stanford** on August 23–24, 2025, at Oshman Hall at **Stanford University**, in partnership with the **Stanford Hamid and Christina Moghadam Program in Iranian Studies** and the **UCLA Film & Television Archive**. The two-day program brought acclaimed contemporary Iranian films to the Bay Area for exclusive screenings, featuring **Tatami**, codirected by Academy Award winner **Guy Nattiv** and Cannes Award-winning actress **Zar Amir**, **The Witness** by **Nader Saeivar** (cowritten with **Jafar Panahi**), and **Seven Days** by **Ali Samadi Ahadi**, written by **Mohammad Rasoulof**. The lineup also included award-winning short films from the Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival: **Suitcase** by **Saman Hosseinpour** and **Ako Zandkarimi**, **Left Handed** by **Nasrin Mohammadpour**, and **The Dinner Party** by **Neda Jebelli**, highlighting emerging voices in Iranian cinema.



Mehregan

FAMILY FESTIVAL

Farhang Foundation presented the **Mehregan Family Festival** on September 7, 2025, at the **Bowers Museum** in Santa Ana, marking its first-ever collaboration with the museum. Rooted in one of Iran's most ancient traditions, the free family festival celebrated Mehregan, a holiday honoring love, gratitude, and kindness, through a full day of cultural programming for all ages. The event featured live dance performances by the **Melika Fathi Dance Company**, live music by the **Dafbang Daf Players** and musicians from the **ARIA Music Academy**,

and Iranian cuisine by **Chef Mojdeh** and **NOUSH**. Families also enjoyed children's activities, creative workshops inspired by Iranian heritage, face painting, and traditional Iranian sweets. Through this joyful community gathering, Farhang Foundation brought together art, music, food, and education to celebrate Iranian culture in an accessible museum setting and expand its cultural partnerships in Southern California.





BOWERS
MUSEUM

FARHANG
FOUNDATION
Cultural Partner





16th Annual FARHANG SHORT FILM FOUNDATION FESTIVAL AWARD CEREMONY

Farhang Foundation presented the **16th Annual Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Awards Ceremony** on September 27, 2025, at the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** in Beverly Hills, copresented with the **City of Beverly Hills**. Hosted by comedian and actress **Melissa Shoshahi**, the evening honored outstanding Iranian short filmmakers with over \$33,000 in awards. Special guests and presenters included the Honorable Mayor of Beverly Hills, **Dr. Sharona Nazarian**, **Lily Amir-Arjomand**, Academy Award-nominated actress **Shohreh Aghdashloo**, actress and activist **Sara Seyed**, and Academy Award-winning filmmakers **Shirin Sohani** and **Hossein Molayemi**.

The First Place Award was presented to **The Granny & Fishes** by **Maria Mavafi** and **Ehsan Farokhi Fard**, followed by **Abraham** by **Elnaz Ghaderpour** and **Reza Gamini** (Second Place) and **Where the Winds Die** by **Pejman Alipour** (Third Place). The Audience Choice Award honored **Son** by **Saman Hosseinpour**. The celebration concluded with an outdoor after-party featuring music by **KCRW's DJ Nassir Nassirzadeh** and Iranian cuisine by **Maison de la Fork**.



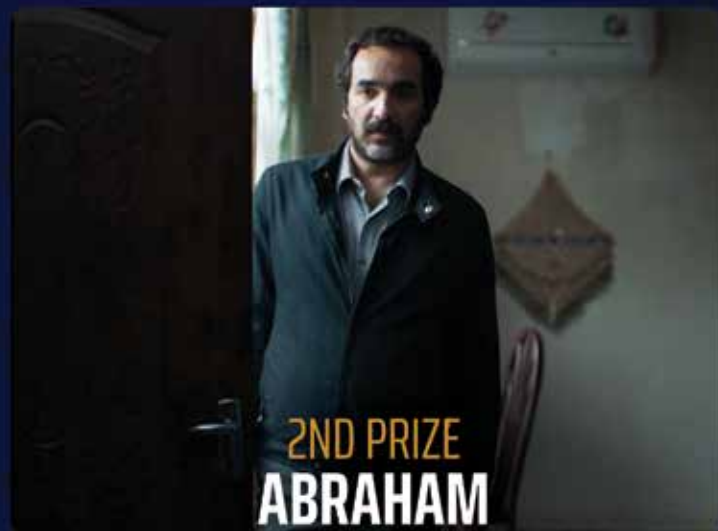
Wallis Annenberg
Center for the
Performing Arts



16th Annual
FARHANG FOUNDATION SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
WINNERS



1ST PRIZE
THE GRANNY & FISHES



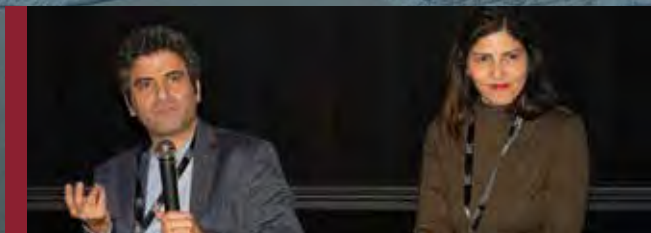
2ND PRIZE
ABRAHAM



3RD PRIZE
WHERE THE WINDS DIE



AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD
SON



NEW PORT BEACH FILM FEST

Farhang Foundation partnered with the **Newport Beach Film Festival** to present Orange County premieres of two acclaimed Iranian films in October 2025 at the Regal Edwards Big Newport theaters. On October 18, the documentary **Cutting Through Rocks** by **Sara Khaki** and **Mohammadreza Eyni** screened as part of NBFF 2025, followed by a conversation with the directors. The film, which received the Grand Jury Award at the Sundance Film Festival, tells the powerful story of Sara Shahverdi, the first elected councilwoman of her Iranian village, and her efforts to challenge entrenched patriarchal traditions. On October 20, Farhang also presented **Reading Lolita in Tehran**, directed by **Eran Riklis** and starring **Golshifteh Farahani**, **Zar Amir**, and **Mina Kavani**, adapted from **Azar Nafisi**'s bestselling memoir.



Gala

Farhang Foundation hosted its **14th Annual Fundraising Gala** on November 1, 2025, at the **Beverly Wilshire Hotel** in Beverly Hills, bringing together supporters, community leaders, and cultural patrons for an elegant evening dedicated to Iranian art and culture. The sold-out event was hosted by comedian **Tehran**, who served as master of ceremonies, and featured a live performance by **Ever Band** led by the legendary **Shahbal Shabpareh** of the Black Cats.

The evening also included a curated silent auction highlighting exceptional works and experiences in support of Farhang Foundation's mission, followed by a fundraising Pledge Drive. All proceeds from the gala directly supported more than one hundred annual programs and initiatives presented by the foundation, further advancing its commitment to celebrating and promoting Iranian culture locally and globally.



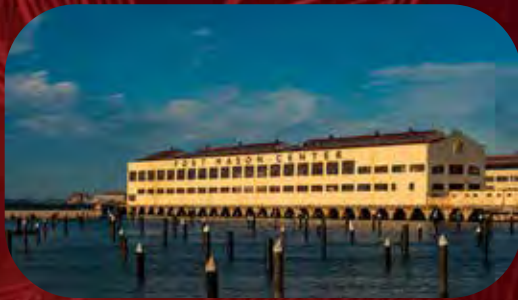


SAN FRANCISCO VOICES UNVEILED

MALIHEH MORADI & MINA DERIS

COMPOSED BY EHSAN MATOORI

Farhang Foundation presented the San Francisco premiere of **Voices Unveiled** on October 12, 2025, at **Cowell Theater** at the **Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture**. Composed and produced by internationally acclaimed Iranian composer **Ehsan Matoori**, the concert featured the powerful voices of **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina Deris** in a moving musical journey blending Iranian traditional and folk music, particularly from Iran's southern regions with contemporary fusion elements. A bilingual, three-part composition, **Voices Unveiled** gave voice to stories of Iranian women centered on identity, resilience, and freedom, offering audiences an emotionally resonant and artistically bold performance. Through this presentation, Farhang Foundation continued its commitment to supporting innovative Iranian musical works and expanding our reach to new audiences across the United States.







The Dawn is Too Far

STORIES OF IRANIAN-AMERICAN LIFE

Farhang Foundation presented the Los Angeles premiere of **The Dawn Is Too Far** on October 15, 2025, at the **Fowler Museum** at UCLA, in partnership with the UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, with additional support from the UCLA Program of Iranian Studies and the UCLA Program on Central Asia. Codirected by **Persis Karim** and **Soumyaa Kapil Behrens**, the documentary explores the lives of eight Iranian Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area, offering a layered and human-centered portrait of Iranian-American identity through personal narratives and rare archival footage. The screening was followed by a moderated conversation with codirector Persis Karim and sociologist **Kevan Harris**, associate professor at UCLA and lead researcher for the UCLA Iranian Diaspora Dashboard, and concluded with a reception for attendees.



Fowler
MUSEUM AT UCLA



IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT

LOS ANGELES PREMIERE WITH JAFAR PANAHİ

Farhang Foundation, in partnership with **NEON**, presented the Los Angeles premiere of **It Was Just an Accident** on October 19, 2025, at **AMC Century City**, marking a rare in-person appearance by legendary Iranian filmmaker **Jafar Panahi**. The screening celebrated Panahi's latest feature, which won the Palme d'Or at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, and was followed by an exclusive post-screening conversation between Panahi and **Paul Malcolm** of the UCLA Film & Television Archive. Widely hailed as one of the most powerful films of the year, the event brought audiences face-to-face with a towering figure of world cinema and underscored Farhang Foundation's commitment to presenting landmark Iranian films and fostering meaningful dialogue around artistic freedom, justice, and the transformative power of storytelling.





Farhang Foundation proudly continued its long-standing partnership with the **American Film Institute** for the eleventh consecutive year by presenting Iranian films at **AFI FEST 2025**, held October 22–26, 2025, at the **TCL Chinese Theatres** in Hollywood. This year's lineup featured **1001 Frames** by Iranian American filmmaker **Mehrnoush Alia**, screened on October 22 and followed by a conversation with the director and actor **Mohammad Aghebati**; **Divine Comedy (Komedi Elahi)** by **Ali Asgari**, presented in multiple screenings and exploring themes of artistic freedom and censorship; and **Honeyjoon** by **Lilian T. Mehrel**, screened on October 25 and followed by a filmmaker conversation. Through this continued collaboration with AFI, Farhang Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Iranian filmmakers and amplifying Iranian stories on one of the world's most prominent international film festival stages.





FARHANG CONNECT

Live Virtual Talks by Influential
Iranians and Scholars of Iran

Through its Farhang Connect virtual series, Farhang Foundation continued to bring audiences into conversation with influential voices shaping contemporary Iranian culture, art, and scholarship. In 2025 the series featured a conversation between renowned author and gallerist Leila Heller and award-winning culinary writer Naz Deravian, exploring Heller's acclaimed cookbook **Persian Feasts: Recipes and Stories from a Family Table** and the role of food in preserving memory, identity, and family history. The series also presented **Y.Z. Kami: The Messenger**, a rare discussion with internationally celebrated artist Y.Z. Kami, joined by distinguished curator Dr. Fereshteh Daffari and renowned art critic Dr. Robert Storr, offering audiences a deeper understanding of the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of Kami's work. Together, these programs reflected Farhang Connect's ongoing commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue and expanding access to Iranian voices through engaging virtual experiences. All 34 original episodes in the Farhang Connect series have collectively garnered more than 1 million views worldwide.



Lectures on Iranian History, Literature, and Culture

UC SANTA BARBARA

IRANIAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

In partnership with the Iranian Studies Initiative at UC Santa Barbara, Farhang Foundation continued its UCSB Lecture Series with two thought-provoking programs featuring leading scholars of Iranian history, art, and society. Dr. Farzin Vejdani presented **Policing, Punishment, and Authority in Iran**, exploring the complex relationship between state authority, religious institutions, and concepts of public and private life in Qajar Iran through the lens of his book **Private Sins, Public Crimes**. Later in the year, Dr. Pamela Karimi presented **Women, Art, Freedom: Artists and Street Politics in Iran**, examining the artistic movements that emerged during the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising and the role of artists in shaping public discourse and social change. Together, these lectures provided audiences with meaningful opportunities to engage with contemporary scholarship and deepen their understanding of Iranian history, culture, and society. These one-hour lectures have collectively been viewed more than 368,000 times over twenty-four episodes from over thirty countries.



UCLA IRANIAN MUSIC LECTURE SERIES



THE LEGACY OF JALIL SHAHNAZ

Moderated by Dr. Shahab Paranj

As part of the **UCLA Iranian Music Conference Series**, Farhang Foundation partnered with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** to present **The Legacy of Jalil Shahnaz** on November 14, 2025, at Lani Hall at UCLA. The program honored Jalil Shahnaz, one of the most influential masters of the tar and a defining figure in Iranian contemporary music, whose artistry expanded the expressive boundaries of Iranian classical tradition. Featuring a research presentation by Iranian music scholar and performer **Ghasem Rahimzadeh Ilkhchi** and moderated by composer and educator **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, the evening explored Shahnaz's musical innovations, artistic legacy, and lasting influence on generations of musicians and scholars. Supported by the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music**, the event underscored Farhang Foundation's commitment to preserving Iranian music through intergenerational dialogue.



REMEMBERING HORMOZ FARHAT: Music, Scholarship, and Beyond

As part of the **UCLA Iranian Music Lecture Series**, Farhang Foundation partnered with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** to present **Remembering Hormoz Farhat—Music, Scholarship, and Beyond** on December 12, 2025, at Lani Hall at UCLA. The program honored the life and legacy of **Hormoz Farhat**—composer, ethnomusicologist, and pioneering scholar—whose work laid the foundation for the academic study of Iranian music in the United States and beyond. Featuring a lecture by composer and scholar **Dr. Shahab Paranj** on the concept of Dastgāh, followed by a conversation with **Dr. Robert Garfias**, the event offered both scholarly insight and personal reflections on Farhat's profound influence as an educator, researcher, and cultural leader. Supported by the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music**, the program underscored Farhang Foundation's ongoing commitment to preserving Iranian musical heritage through research, education, and intergenerational dialogue.

UCLA IRANIAN MUSIC LECTURE SERIES



TRIBUTE TO AHMAD PEJMAN

As part of the **UCLA Iranian Music Lecture Series**, Farhang Foundation partnered with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** to present **Tribute to Ahmad Pejman** on December 14, 2025, at Schoenberg Hall at UCLA. The program honored the life and legacy of **Maestro Ahmad Pejman** (1935–2025), one of Iran's most influential composers, whose symphonic, theatrical, and cinematic works bridged Iranian musical heritage with global classical traditions. The tribute featured special musical performances by **Sohrab Pournazeri**, the **Iranshahr Orchestra Collective**, and a string quintet, alongside reflections by **Shirin Pejman**, **Sadegh Nojouki**, **Shardad Rohani**, and **Parviz Sayyad**. Through music and personal remembrance, the event celebrated Pejman's enduring artistic impact and his profound influence on generations of musicians and audiences worldwide. Supported by the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music**, the program reflected Farhang Foundation's commitment to honoring the legacy of Iranian cultural masters through education and live artistic engagement.









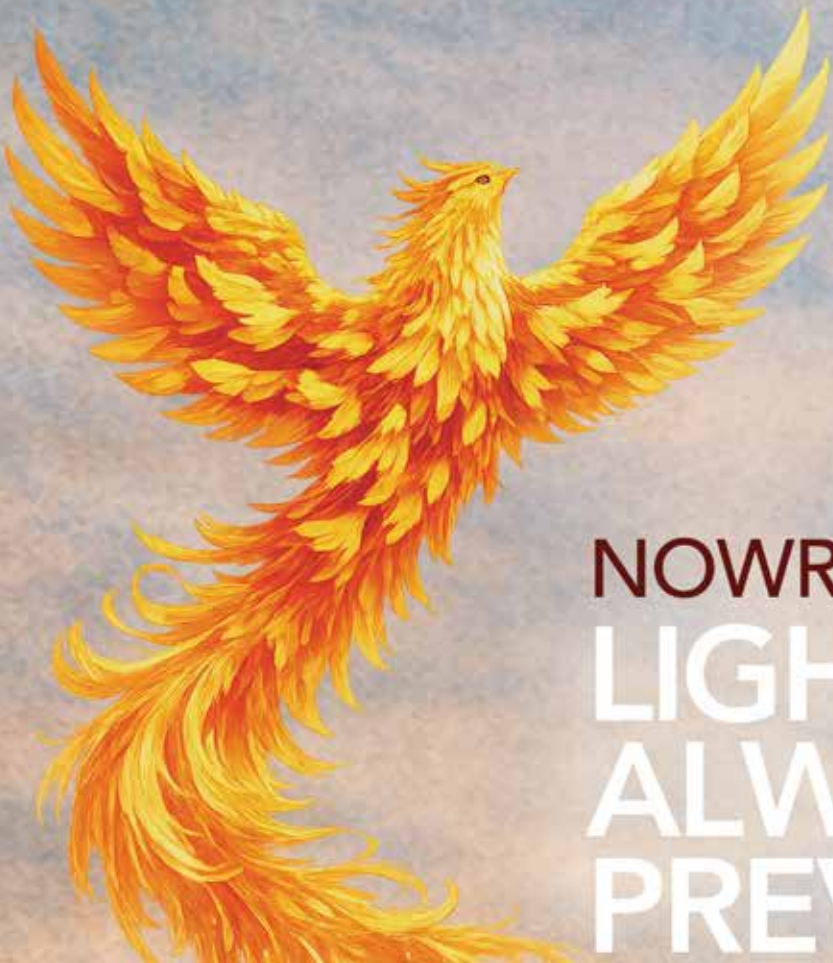
FARHANG
FOUNDATION
13TH ANNUAL
CELEBRATION OF

Shab-e Yalda

Farhang Foundation presented the sold-out **13th Annual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda** on December 20, 2025, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall, copresented with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music**. Honoring the ancient Iranian celebration of the winter solstice and the longest night of the year, the evening wove together music, poetry, storytelling, and dance in a vibrant tribute to one of Iran's most cherished traditions. The program featured the return of **Voices Unveiled**, featuring acclaimed vocalists **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina**

Deris and composer and music director **Ehsan Matoori**, as well as evocative epic storytelling by **Gordafarid**, Iran's first female "naqqal." The celebration also included a graceful dance performance by **Tara Pandeya** that brought a visual dimension to the evening, further enriching the immersive cultural experience. Together, these elements reflected Farhang Foundation's ongoing commitment to presenting Iranian heritage through multidisciplinary artistic expression and shared communal celebration.



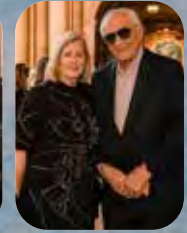


NOWRUZ LIGHT ALWAYS PREVAILS

HONORING THE ENDURING VOICES OF IRANIANS



Following the difficult decision to cancel its annual outdoor Nowruz Festival at UCLA in response to the ongoing loss of innocent lives in Iran, Farhang Foundation presented **NOWRUZ: Light Always Prevails—Honoring the Enduring Voices of Iranians** on March 8, 2026, at the historic **Royce Hall** at UCLA. The concert brought the community together for an evening of reflection, resilience, and cultural solidarity, featuring a rare performance by the grande dame of classical Iranian music **Parissa**, the Persian-language debut of acclaimed soprano **Golda Zahra**, and the **Iranshahr Orchestra** under the direction of **Maestro Shahab Paranj**. Presented in partnership with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** and the **Gramian-Emrani Center for Iranian Music at UCLA**, the program celebrated the enduring power of Iranian music while honoring the voices and spirit of the Iranian people.





NOWRUZ BANNERS

IN LOS ANGELES & BEVERLY HILLS

In recognition of Nowruz 2026, Farhang Foundation once again partnered with the Cities of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills to display its annual Nowruz street banner campaign throughout key corridors and public spaces. This year's banner theme "Light Always Prevails" paid tribute to the enduring voices of Iranians and served as a visible expression of cultural pride, resilience, and unity during a period of profound grief and reflection for the Iranian community. Reaching thousands of residents and visitors each day, the banners helped raise awareness of Nowruz and highlighted the rich cultural heritage of Iran while reinforcing Farhang Foundation's mission to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture even through the darkest periods.



Annual Virtual CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ



Throughout the 2026 Nowruz season, Farhang Performances premiered a diverse collection of original digital works created exclusively for Farhang Foundation Nowruz Edition by leading Iranian artists. Released online and viewed over one million times by audiences worldwide, these performances explored themes of identity, resilience, memory, freedom, and cultural continuity through music, dance, storytelling, and multidisciplinary collaboration. Featured works included **My Iran** (ایران من) by **Fared Shafinury**, **From**

Rain, A Rose (از باران یک گل) by **Tara Ghassemieh**, **From Requiem to the Light** by **Ehsan Matoori**, **One Voice** by **Loga Ramin Torkian** featuring **Azam Ali**, **Sussan Deyhim**, **Maliheh Moradi**, and **Negin K.T.**, **Moon and Mirror** (ماه و آینه) starring **Melieka Fathi**, and **Ava's Nowruz Adventure: Making New Friends**, written and directed by **Negar Estakhr**. Together, these original productions reached across thirty countries, providing a global platform for Iranian artistic expression while expanding access to cultural programming beyond the traditional stage.



HAFT-SÎN

AT THE WESTFIELD CENTURY CITY SHOPPING CENTER

Westfield
CENTURY CITY

Beginning March 21, 2026, Farhang Foundation proudly continued its long collaboration with the **Westfield Century City Shopping Center**, unveiling a breathtaking Grand Haft-Sîn installation in honor of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Designed with meticulous care by **Paris Rezaie** of **Maison de La Fork**, this display offered visitors an enchanting journey into the heart of Iranian culture, highlighting the profound beauty and symbolism of this ancient tradition. Each element of the Haft-Sîn was thoughtfully crafted, celebrating the renewal and hope that Nowruz brings.



NOWRUZ SAN FRANCISCO LIGHT ALWAYS PREVAILS

Santoor master **Ehsan Matoori**
and percussionist **Greg Ellis**
accompanied by dancer **Miriam Peretz**

On March 22, 2026, Farhang Foundation partnered with the **Asian Art Museum** of San Francisco to present **NOWRUZ: Light Always Prevails**, the museum's annual observance of the Iranian New Year. The daylong program celebrated the enduring cultural significance of Nowruz through a live performance by **Ehsan Matoori**, **Greg Ellis**, and **Miriam Peretz**, a Haft-Sin display, a screening of selected films from the Farhang Short Film Festival, and a Persian calligraphy demonstration by **Arash Shirinbab**. Bringing together visitors from across the Bay Area, the event highlighted the traditions of Nowruz while fostering greater appreciation for Iranian art, culture, and heritage.



NOWRUZ: ECHOES OF FREEDOM

In Honor of the Enduring Voices of Iranians

Farhang Foundation continued its long-standing partnership with the renowned **Pacific Symphony** of Orange County to present **NOWRUZ: Echoes of Freedom—In Honor of the Enduring Voices of Iranians** at the **Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall** in Costa Mesa. Conducted by Music Director Laureate **Maestro Carl St.Clair**, with the return of legendary composer and conductor **Maestro Shardad Rohani**, the concert featured an extraordinary lineup of guest artists including guitarist and composer **Babak Amini**, countertenor **Cameron Shahbazi**, soprano **Sara Hamidi** in her US stage debut, and dancers and choreographers **Tara Ghassemieh** and **Vitor Luiz**. Through a powerful program of Iranian and orchestral works, the evening offered a moving celebration of resilience, artistic excellence, and the enduring spirit of Iranian voices through the universal language of music. Guests were also welcomed by a stunning Haft-Sin installation designed by **Marjaneh Afkhami** and created by **A Seed and Stone**, along with preconcert and intermission lobby performances by the **L.A. Daf Ensemble** and the **Doran Dance Company**, creating a vibrant and immersive Nowruz experience.









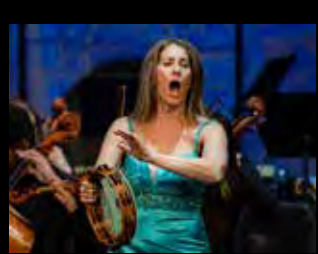
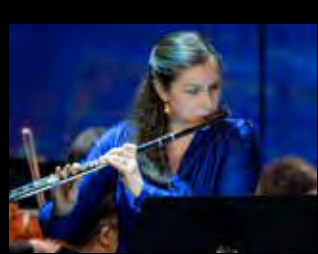
THE IRANSHAHR ORCHESTRA



70th Birthday of Richard Danielpour



On January 21, 2026, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music**, presented a special concert at Schoenberg Hall celebrating the seventieth birthday of acclaimed American composer **Richard Danielpour**. Featuring the **Iranshahr Orchestra**, the program highlighted Danielpour's **Symphony** and **Violin Concerto**, with violinist **Ida Kavafian** as soloist and guest conductor **Stefan Lano** leading the orchestra, as well as **Breaking the Veil**, performed by soloists **Alecia Lawyer**, **Kristin Wolfe Jensen**, and **Catherine Gregory**. The evening also included the moving song cycle **Songs of Love and Loss**, featuring celebrated soprano **Hila Plitmann** and conducted by **Shahab Paranj**. This free public concert offered a luminous tribute to Danielpour's lasting influence on contemporary classical music and reflected Farhang Foundation's commitment to presenting significant musical voices through world-class performances.



FARHANG

PERFORMANCES

With 104 episodes to date and more than sixteen million views across over fifty countries, the Farhang Performances Virtual Series continues to bring the performing arts to a truly global audience through free and accessible online programming.

During the 2025–26 fiscal year, the series premiered a diverse collection of performances, including **Embrasse-Moi** (مرا ببوس) by **Navan**; **Mast** and **The Ancient Fortress** (قلعه پیر ایران) by **Sima Bina**; **Baba Karam** (بابا کرم), **Shanehayat** (شانه هایت), **Bavar Kon** (باور کن), and **Warsaw Sessions** by **Cameron Shahbazi** and **Sophia Muñoz**; **Our Iran** (ایران ما) by **Mahdieh Mohammadkhani** and **The Iranshahr Orchestra**; and **Fountain of Eternity** by **Maliheh Moradi** and **Tamir Hargana**.

Spanning traditional and contemporary music, reinterpretations of beloved Iranian works, and original artistic collaborations, these performances showcased the richness and diversity of Iranian artistic expression while connecting audiences around the world to Iran's cultural heritage. Together, the Farhang Performances series continues to serve as a vital platform for preserving tradition, inspiring innovation, and sharing Iranian culture with a global community.

NAVAN
مرا ببوس
Mara Beboos
Embrasse-moi



WORLD PREMIERE ★ FARHANG PERFORMANCES ★
AMIRALI KAMALI
May we meet again



SIMA BINA
MAST
WORLD PREMIERE

★ FARHANG PERFORMANCES ★



★ FARHANG PERFORMANCES ★

CAMERON SHAHBAZI
BABA KARAM بابا کرم
THE IRANSHAHR ORCHESTRA



★ ★ FARHANG
★ PERFORMANCES ★

MAHDIEH
MOHAMMADKHANI
ایران ما - OUR IRAN
THE IRANSHAHR
ORCHESTRA

BAVAR
کون KÖN
Cameron Shahbazi
& Sophia Muñoz

★ ★ FARHANG
★ PERFORMANCES ★

★ ★ FARHANG
★ PERFORMANCES ★

FOUNTAIN OF
ETERNITY

VOCALS
MALIHEH MORADI
& TAMIR HARGANA

COMPOSED AND
PRODUCED BY
EHSAN MATOORI



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شانه‌هایت

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& Sophia Muñoz



WORLD PREMIERE

SIMA BINA

THE ANCIENT FORTRESS (IRAN)

قلعه پیر ایران



Cameron Shahbazi
& Sophia Muñoz

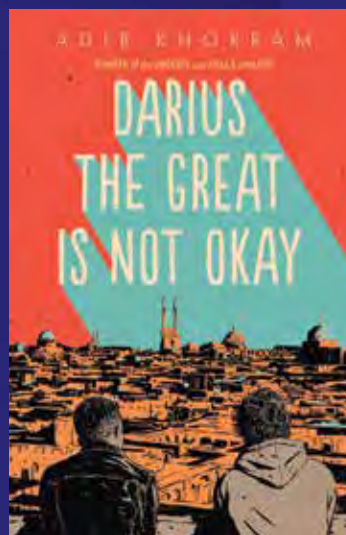
Warran Sessions





With Host
ABDI NAZEMIAN

Through its Farhang Literature book club series, Farhang Foundation continued to spotlight contemporary Iranian and Iranian American voices through engaging conversations between acclaimed authors and readers. In 2025 the series featured best-selling author Adib Khorram discussing his award-winning young adult novel **Darius the Great Is Not Okay** with host Abdi Nazemian, exploring themes of identity, belonging, mental health, and the Iranian American experience. Later in the year, Farhang welcomed award-winning author Porochista Khakpour for a conversation with Abdi Nazemian about her best-selling novel **Tehrangelles**, a witty and insightful portrait of an Iranian American family navigating culture, ambition, and self-discovery in Los Angeles. Together, these programs fostered meaningful literary dialogue while celebrating the diversity and depth of contemporary Iranian storytelling. To date, this series has over 323,000 views over four episodes.



Best-Selling Author
ADIB KHORRAM



Best-Selling Author
POROCHISTA KHAKPOUR



Persian 101

Persian Language and Culture After-School Program

Farhang Foundation believes that the most immediate and enduring way to preserve Iranian heritage and honor its culture, history, and language is through education.

In 2015, with the community's support, Farhang Foundation launched the first-ever Persian Language and Culture After-School Program in partnership with local public and private schools of Southern California. This program, which is provided free of charge to participating schools, creates a platform for K–12 students to be exposed to Iran's rich and beautiful language and culture. To date, more than 3,500 students have enrolled in this free program throughout Southern California.

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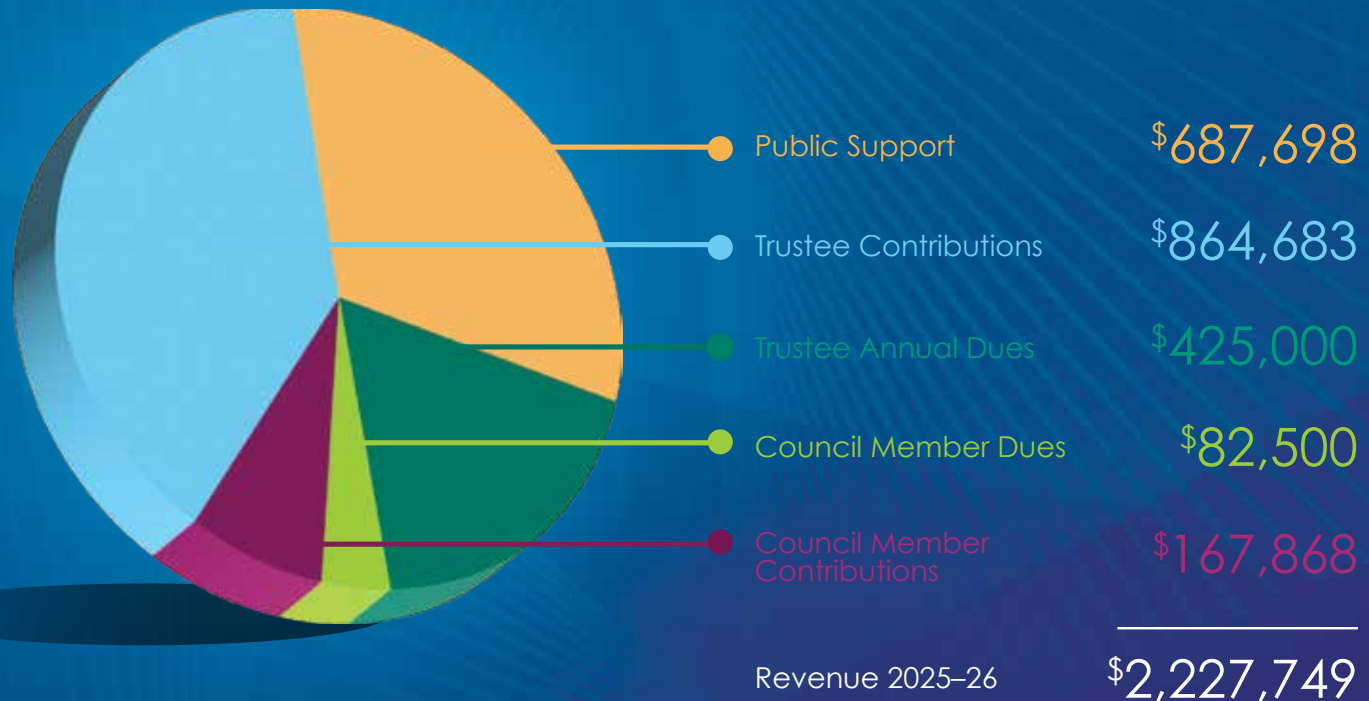
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