



## Project Description

A theatrical production for children and families around the world featuring storytelling, vibrant digital paintings and live orchestra. This hour-long enchanting adaptation of a tale from Ferdowsi's epic poem *Shahnameh* is offered alongside educational workshops and an immersive experience of Persian culture, transports children to the world of ancient Persia and exploring timeless themes of loss, hope, love and forgiveness.

**Story:** Adapted for children from Ferdowsi's ancient Persian epic *Shahnameh (Book of Kings)*

**Genre:** Myth & Fantasy

**Length:** 1 hour

**Project Date:** Spring/Summer 2022

## Artists

**Composer:** Shohreh Shakoory

**Narrator/Soprano:** April Fredrick

**Illustrator:** Meysam Mousavi

**Director:** Julia Mintzer

**Animation:** Hooran Studio

**Translator/Librettist:** Siavash Yazdanifar, Shohreh Shakoory . trans. Prof Naser Kanani

**Conductor:** James Ross

**Orchestra:** Kent Sinfonia

**Central Themes:** Love, hope, forgiveness, inclusivity, ability to acknowledge wrong-doing, reconciliation, redemption, acceptance of people with different appearance and abilities

## Project Aims

- Introducing children to the riches of Persian culture
- Celebrate the millennial anniversary of Ferdowsi's death and the achievement in the *Shahnameh*, the longest epic poem in existence by a single author
- Introducing families to the sounds of ethnic Persian instruments
- Enrich cultural relations between Iran and Western countries in uncertain times
- Using live performance and storytelling to help children connect more deeply to the world of the story and the wisdom of our ancestors
- Encouraging openness and diversity
- Explore the rich ancient symbol of the Phoenix, which appears in the ancient literature of many cultures
- Workshops which help children explore the themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance of people with different appearance and abilities

## USPs

- Only setting of *Shahnameh* by a female Iranian composer
- Only children's setting of *Shahnameh* for animation and live musicians and narrator
- First orchestral setting by a female composer under the current Islamic regime
- An opportunity to present a programme which, due to its female singer, could never be presented in public under Iran's Islamic administration
- Support an innovative project which supports an underrepresented female artist (Shohreh Shakoory), includes an international creative team (with both Iranians and Americans) and represents an important contribution to diverse children's programming

## Premiere

The premiere will feature a performance with Kent Sinfonia and ethnic instrumentalists alongside workshops for children and families, a short lecture for older children and adults on the background of *Shahnameh* by our associated academic, and an interactive exhibition of Iranian arts and crafts, music and storytelling, with a chance to sample Persian cuisine.

## Dissemination

The project website [www.zalandphoenix.com](http://www.zalandphoenix.com) offers more detail on the creative team, music, story and creative process and links to a short project introduction by Shohreh Shakoory (developed since 2017) and a three-minute teaser film.

We will then make a high-quality audio and video recording of the project, which our conductor James Ross can distribute through his company Ulysses Arts, which has established distribution links to all the major streaming platforms.

We are also considering an interactive children's book with QR codes linking to audio and video clips from the project.

This package of performances and education workshops is available for worldwide collaborations with local ensembles and educational organisations.

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[www.zalandphoenix.com](http://www.zalandphoenix.com)