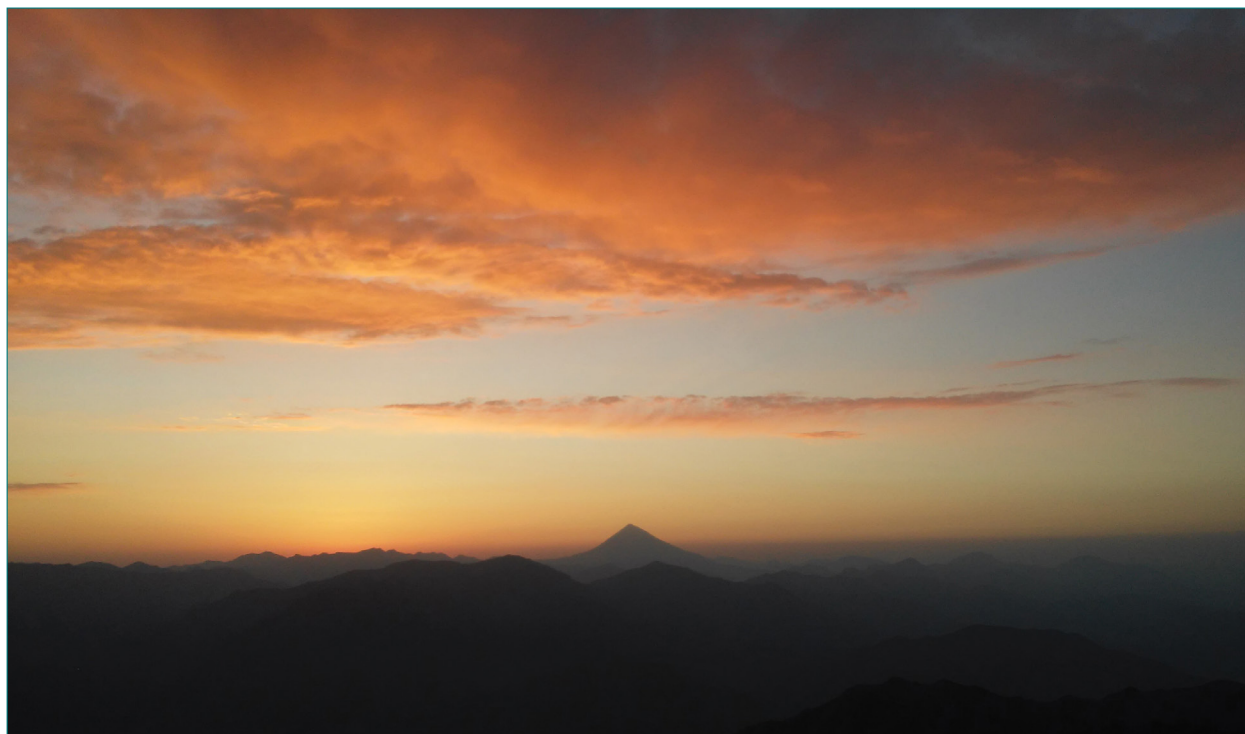




Amir Mahyar
TAFRESHIPOUR

Persian Echoes
(Concerto for Harp and Orchestra)
Lucid Dreams • Yearning in C

Gabriella Dall'Olio, Harp
English Chamber Orchestra • Alexander Rahbari
Crash Ensemble • Darragh Morgan



Persian Echoes
(Concerto for Harp and Orchestra)

	Persian Echoes	21:17
1	Andante, Allegro	9:10
2	Tranquillo	6:17
3	Allegro	5:50
	Gabriella Dall'Olio, Harp English Chamber Orchestra • Alexander Rahbari, Conductor	
	Alas	19:50
4	Allegro	9:40
5	Mourning	10:10
	Christopher O'Neal, Oboe Helen Pierce, Clarinet Richard Skinner, Bassoon Katie Pryce, Horn Mary Dullea, Piano Darragh Morgan, Conductor	
6	Lucid Dreams: Andante	8:21
	Gabriella Dall'Olio, Harp Adi Tal, Cello Darragh Morgan, Violin	
7	Yearning in C	9:25
	Crash Ensemble • Darragh Morgan, Conductor	

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Amir Mahyar TAFRESHIPOUR (b. 1974)
Persian Echoes • Alas
Lucid Dreams • Yearning in C

Persian Echoes

Concerto for harp and orchestra

Persian Echoes was completed during December 2005 in Corwen, North Wales, in response to a commission from the BBC Symphony Orchestra, but the work had its genesis in Tehran. I visited the city of Kermanshah in the west of Iran where there are beautiful and intricate carvings of harps from the Sasanid era (224–651 AD). My intention was not to compose an exotic piece simply with the use of Eastern melodies, but rather a work which weaves together sounds associated with Persian traditional music combined with Western classical music. My early childhood in Iran left me with a deep feeling for sounds which are specifically Persian, but I was also fortunate to be involved at quite a young age with Western classical music.

One aspect of *Persian Echoes* is the use of *Homayoun*, one of the seven Persian traditional (*dastgah*) modes, and it is fascinating to see how well this mode works on the harp. Persian traditional music is very much improvised, so the first movement starts with a passage for solo harp which has an improvisatory character, before the piece gains a more structured form. The first movement is based on the *Homayoun* mode and the theme which runs throughout the whole movement always refers back to the note B, a note from this mode. The first movement has a feeling of anguish; at times anger and frustration

also come to the fore as sudden loud chords on the harp interrupt. The end, however, is more conciliatory as it returns to solo harp notes before finishing unresolved.

The second movement is more a picture of ancient Persia and has a sense of quiet sadness, perhaps the feeling of loss for a forgotten empire. The movement begins with a theme played by the strings which the harp then takes over in a more florid and extended way. A passage for string quartet recaptures feelings I had while recollecting the past, and another section uses pizzicati in the strings and harmonics in the harp, capturing a breathtaking silence I once experienced while visiting Persepolis. Elsewhere, the string counterpoint towards the end may evoke the struggles of contemporary life in Iran, and then, finally, feelings of sadness, loneliness and loss return with tremolos in the harp.

The third movement captures the lively spirit of Persia, and makes use of the strong rhythmic elements found in Persian folk music. Persians' great sense of fun and their capacity to remain positive is shown here in fast accented clusters and short rhythmic *glissandi* on the harp. The central part recalls a slow Persian dance, which leads into the harp cadenza. Finally the harp brings the music back to the faster folk pattern of the opening; percussion, then strings, join in and the music gathers momentum before ending in a festive spirit.

Alas

Quintet in two movements for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn and piano

The idea for composing a quintet came from the deserted landscape of Kavir e Lut in central Iran, a vast land in which the only music is total silence. *Alas* is based on Persian traditional music. The main motive is derived from *Heṣār Gushe*, a modulatory *Gusheh*, or central Iranian melody, from the basic scalar pattern of *Cahārgāh*. This underlying musical idea forms a monophonic line which runs throughout the work, sometimes concealed in a rich chord. Like links in a chain, contrasting musical segments of oriental tinted monody and chordal density converge, to produce a gently flowing stream of music. *Alas* is dedicated to the Danish composer Mogens Christensen.

Lucid Dreams

Trio for harp, violin and cello

From its very beginning *Lucid Dreams* expresses a free spirit of exploration. The form is rhapsodic and only during the development does the music sometimes seem like a more directed improvisation. The extemporising of the harp also adds to the music's Eastern flavour.

Yearning in C

Yearning in C circulates around the note C and this remains the driving force of the entire composition, a canvas full of small collages. The ornamentation around the musical skeleton is always improvisatory, often disappearing into silence to leave space for the listener's imagination. The dark tone colours are all ideas from childhood memories in Scandinavia and the impression of light and dark across the different seasons.

Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour



© Darlaine Honey

Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour was born in 1974 and is a leading Iranian contemporary composer. He has worked with a number of major ensembles, soloists and orchestras and specialises in contemporary music that reaches across time and continents. His opera *The Doll Behind the Curtain*, based on a work by the famous Persian writer Sadegh Hedayat, was premiered at the Tête à Tête Opera Festival in King's Place, London in 2015. In 2003 he won the first prize at the biennial composition competition for new music at Tehran University with his solo piano work *Images of Childhood*. In the same year he was awarded a silver medal for outstanding achievement at Trinity College of Music, presented by the Duke of Kent. The BBC commissioned his harp concerto *Persian Echoes* in 2005, premiered under the baton of Pascal Rophé and broadcast on BBC Radio 3. In 2016 Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour completed his PhD in composition at Brunel University, London, under the supervision of Professor Christopher Fox.

Gabriella Dall'Olio, Harp



© Darlaine Honey

Gabriella Dall'Olio has inspired audiences throughout Europe and the Middle East with her solo recitals and chamber music concerts for the past two decades. After training in Italy, France and Germany with professors including Pierre Jamet, Fabrice Pierre, Jacqueline Borot, Giselle Herbert and Anna Loro, she earned considerable recognition and won prizes in numerous competitions. She has recorded for radio and television internationally, including the BBC, Radio France, RAI, Bayerischer Rundfunk and Radio Suisse. She has appeared regularly with the Gruppo Musica Insieme di Cremona, the Wiener Virtuosen and with the German ensemble Kontraste, playing premieres and works by 20th-century and contemporary composers. Her recordings have received critical acclaim and include solo CDs and chamber works on the Koch, Stradivarius, Dal Segno and Ambitus labels.

She lives in London, where she has appeared with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Royal Opera House Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Abroad she has played regularly with the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Sinfonieorchester des SWR, the Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks. Alongside her busy performing schedule, she is deeply committed to teaching and developing the careers of young harpists and is currently the head of harp studies at Trinity College of Music.

Alexander Rahbari, Conductor



Persian-Austrian conductor and composer Alexander Rahbari studied conducting and composing in Vienna, with Hans Swarowsky and Gottfried von Einem, respectively. Having been made chief conductor of the Jeunesses Musicales Orchestra in Teheran at a very young age, he won the gold medal at the international conducting competition in Besançon in 1977, followed a year later by a silver medal in Geneva. This led to the start of his international career. Herbert von Karajan took note of the young artist and invited him to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic as guest conductor in 1979. It was to be the first of a series of such invitations. In 1980 Herbert von Karajan further invited him to be his assistant and substitute at the Salzburg Easter Festival. Over the course of his career, maestro Rahbari has conducted over 120 orchestras worldwide. He was also the artistic director of the Brussels, Zagreb and Málaga Philharmonics, the Virtuosi di Praga and principal guest conductor of the Prague and Belgrade Philharmonics. He has worked with countless acclaimed soloists such as Mischa Maisky, Henryk Szeryng, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Leonid Kogan, Heinrich Schiff, Nigel Kennedy, Shlomo Mintz, Krystian Zimerman, Radu Lupu, Maurice André, and Grace Bumbry.

Darragh Morgan, Violin and Conductor

© Sophie Dennehy



Irish violinist Darragh Morgan (b. 1974) has given world premieres of works dedicated by major contemporary composers such as Arvo Pärt, Sir John Tavener, Kevin Volans, Gerald Barry and Michael Finnissy. He has collaborated with artists including Thomas Adès, Emmanuel Pahud and Nicholas Daniel and led Ensemble Modern, the London Sinfonietta, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Les Siècles, working closely with conductors Pierre Boulez, François-Xavier Roth, Oliver Knussen and Heinz Holliger. He has appeared as a conductor with Crash Ensemble, the Cyprus Chamber Orchestra, the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra, the KZNPO and conducted the premiere of Amir Tafreshipour's opera *The Doll Behind the Curtain* at King's Place, London. As a soloist, he has performed at the Wien Modern, the Festival d'Automne Paris, the Osterfestival Tirol, the Lucerne Festival, a BBC Chamber Music Prom, and in venues in Aldeburgh, Spitalfields, Cheltenham, and at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. He is a founding member of The Fidelio Trio and plays an 1848 Giuseppe Rocca violin, generously on loan from the Morgan-Rocca Instrument Trust which is administered by The Royal Society of Musicians.

English Chamber Orchestra

The English Chamber Orchestra (ECO) is the most recorded chamber orchestra in the world, its discography containing nearly 900 recordings of over 1500 works by more than 400 composers. The ECO has also performed in more countries than any other orchestra, and played with many of the world's greatest musicians. The American radio network CPRN has selected the ECO as one of the world's greatest 'living' orchestras. The illustrious history of the orchestra features many major musical figures. Benjamin Britten was the orchestra's first Patron and a significant musical influence. The ECO's long relationship with such great musicians as Mstislav Rostropovich, Pinchas Zukerman, and earlier with Daniel Barenboim led to an acclaimed complete cycle of Mozart *Piano Concertos* as live performances and recordings, followed later by two further recordings of the complete cycle, with Murray Perahia and Mitsuko Uchida.

www.englishchamberorchestra.co.uk

Crash Ensemble

Crash Ensemble is Ireland's leading new music ensemble. Performing worldwide, from the Edinburgh International Festival to Carnegie Hall, with artists as diverse as Íarla Ó Lionáird (The Gloaming), Bryce Dessner (The National), Richard Reed Parry (Arcade Fire), Sam Amidon and Gavin Friday, Crash Ensemble has made an indelible mark on the Irish music scene and beyond. Founded in 1997 by composer and artistic partner Donnacha Dennehy, Crash Ensemble has worked with some of the most distinctive living composers including Terry Riley, David Lang, Michael Gordon, Louis Andriessen, Arnold Dreyblatt, Kevin Volans, Glen Branca, Nico Muhly and Gerald Barry.

Crash Ensemble has recordings on NMC, Cantaloupe, Nonesuch, and on the Icelandic Bedroom Community label.

Christopher O'Neal, Oboe

Christopher O'Neal studied with Terence MacDonagh at the Royal College of Music, London, and with Heinz Holliger in Freiburg, Germany. Perhaps best known as a chamber musician, he is a founding member of award-winning and ground-breaking ensembles Capricorn and the Elysian Wind Quintet, and has been the oboist of the Fibonacci Sequence since the group's inception in 1994. He is principal oboe and soloist with the Orchestra of St Johns and the London Mozart Players, performing throughout the UK and Europe.

Richard Skinner, Bassoon

Richard Skinner has worked in many different professional music capacities. He has performed in many London musicals, including the original London production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*. As a chamber musician he plays with Lontano and the Fibonacci Sequence. He is a member of the London Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Richard Skinner is a credited session player and also appears as a guest with all the London orchestras.

Helen Pierce, Clarinet

Helen Pierce is on the extra lists of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Northern Sinfonia, Royal Ballet Sinfonia, and English National Ballet. She is also a member of the Britten–Pears Orchestra. Helen plays with Clariphonics, who were selected as Park Lane Group Young Artists 2008/9. Their recent Purcell Room recital was received with great acclaim.

Katie Pryce, Horn

Katie Pryce has enjoyed a busy career in London since returning from her role as principal horn of the Kwa Zulu Natal Orchestra in 2005, working with the London Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and the Royal Philharmonic. She combines her orchestral work with a busy chamber music career, and performs with the Camarilla Ensemble. She recently worked with leading jazz artists Bill Laurence and Snarky Puppy, pioneering the use of French horn in a jazz capacity.

Mary Dullea, Piano

As soloist and chamber musician, Irish pianist Mary Dullea performs internationally. She broadcasts regularly for BBC Radio 3 and RTÉ Lyric FM, and appears on recordings for NMC, Delphian, Altarus, Divine Art, Naxos, Resonus Classics and MN Records. She has performed concertos with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra and a BBC commission with Lontano. She is the pianist in The Fidelio Trio, artistic director of ‘Chamber Music on Valentia’ and director of performance at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Adi Tal, Cello

Winner of the Muriel Taylor Cello Prize and the Making Music Award, Adi Tal has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician at Wigmore Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Teatro Colón, KKL Luzern, the Philharmonie de Paris, and the Louvre Auditorium. She has performed as a soloist with the Israel Philharmonic, the Jerusalem Symphony, and the KZN Philharmonic, collaborating with conductors Thomas Sanderling, James Judd and Daniel Boico. Her performances have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and she has recorded for Resonus and Meridian Records. Adi Tal is a member of The Fidelio Trio and the West-Eastern Divan and Aurora Orchestras. Adi plays on a cello made by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini in Parma dated 1765, generously on loan from a private collection.

Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour is a leading composer from Iran whose music reaches across time and continents, being at once universal, richly exotic, and filled with the composer's own exhilarating joy in creativity. The first ever Iranian harp concerto, *Persian Echoes*, weaves together Western classical heritage with sounds associated with Persian traditional music, including evocative modes and the lively rhythms of the region's folk music. Improvisation is used compellingly in the rhapsodic *Lucid Dreams*, the light and darkness of *Yearning in C* and the vast landscape of *Alas*.

Amir Mahyar TAFRESHIPOUR

(b. 1974)

Persian Echoes

1–3	Persian Echoes Concerto for harp and orchestra	21:17	6	Lucid Dreams Trio for harp, violin and cello	8:21
4–5	Alas Quintet in two movements for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn and piano	19:50	7	Yearning in C	9:25

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Christopher O'Neal, Oboe 4–5 • Helen Pierce, Clarinet 4–5
Richard Skinner, Bassoon 4–5 • Katie Pryce, Horn 4–5 • Adi Tal, Cello 6
Gabriella Dall'Olio, Harp 1–3 6 • Mary Dullea, Piano 4–5
Crash Ensemble 7 • Darragh Morgan, Violin 6, Conductor 4–5 7
English Chamber Orchestra • Alexander Rahbari 1–3

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

Recorded: 12 April 2016 at Henry Wood Hall, London **1–3**, 16 December 2014 at The Forge, London **4–5**,
 28 June 2015 at All Saints Church, London **6** and 2 September 2016 at St Peter's Church, Drogheda **7**
 Producer: Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour • Engineers and editors: Andrew Keener **1–3**, Alex Barnes **4–5**,
 Sebastian Lexer **6** and Adrian Hart **7** • Mixing and mastering: Chris Corrigan • Editions: Composer's own manuscripts
 Booklet notes by the composer • Cover Photo by Babak Milani: *Damāvand at Sunrise*



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