



Alexander
RAHBARI

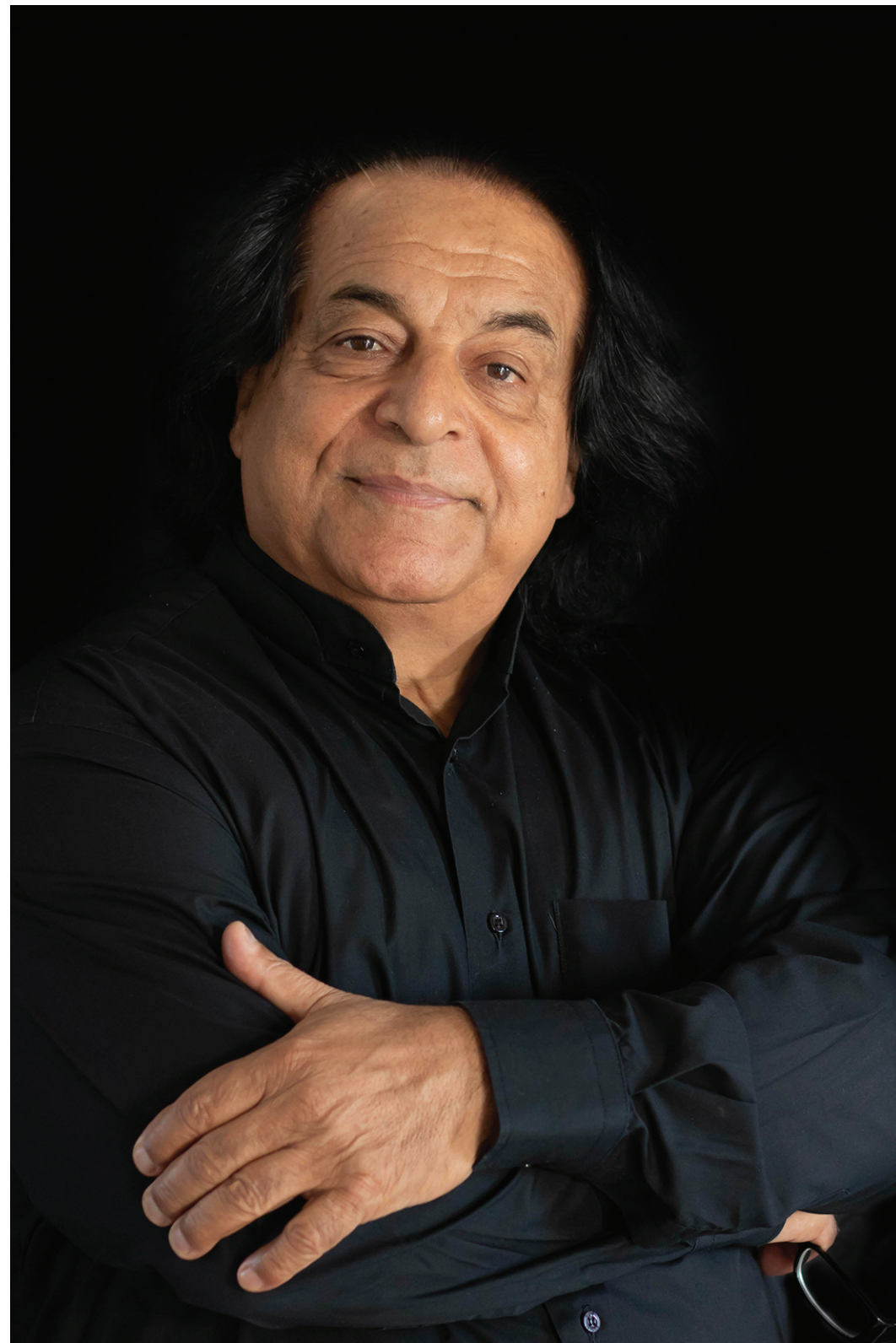
My Mother Persia
Symphonic Poems • 3
Nos. 9 and 10

Ladislav Fančovič,
Saxophone

Reza Fekri, Tenor

Prague Metropolitan
Orchestra

Alexander Rahbari



Alexander Rahbari (b. 1948)

My Mother Persia – Symphonic Poems Nos. 9 and 10

Alexander Rahbari was born in Tehran, Iran. He studied violin and composition with Rahmatollah Badiie and Hossein Dehlavi at the Persian National Music Conservatory. From the age of 17, he was a violinist at the Fine Arts Administration Orchestra under the baton of Hossein Dehlavi. Soon after receiving his violin diploma from the National Conservatory, he won a scholarship from the Iran Ministry of Culture and Art to study composition and conducting in Vienna with Gottfried von Einem, Hans Swarowsky and Karl Österreicher.

In 1973, after his studies, he became director of the Persian National Music Conservatory and Tehran Conservatory succeeding Mostafa Kamal Pourtorab and Hossein Dehlavi. He held these positions for four years before he emigrated back to Europe. Within the same year, he won First Prize of the International Competition for Young Conductors of Besançon, France, and in 1978 received a Silver Medal at the Geneva International Conducting Competition. In the same year he recorded three albums entitled *Symphonische Dichtungen aus Persien* ('Symphonic Poems from Persia') with the Nürnberger Symphoniker in Germany, including six works by some of the greatest 20th-century Iranian composers. In 1979 Rahbari was invited to conduct the Berliner Philharmoniker, and in 1980 he became Herbert von Karajan's assistant. From 1988 to 1996 Rahbari was the principal conductor of the Flemish Radio Orchestra (now the Brussels Philharmonic), and subsequently became music director of the Zagreb Philharmonic.

Rahbari was only twelve when his talent for composition was discovered by Hossein Dehlavi. Besides playing classical violin and Iranian traditional music, Dehlavi, who was director of the Persian National Music Conservatory at the time, began teaching him harmony and counterpoint. In his youth, Rahbari was commissioned by the Iran Ministry of Culture to write a piece per month. As a student, he also wrote many pieces for the Eurasia Quartet, as well as vocal works and compositions featuring Persian mysticism. He became a pupil of Gottfried von Einem, and

began writing the most lauded pieces of his career. His works include *Persian Mysticism – A Symphonic Poem for Orchestra* (1968), music used in United Nation advertising performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (1975), the soundtrack for a documentary by French director André Malraux (1977), *Beirut Symphonic Poem* (1985) originally written for nine flutes, *Halfmoon* (1984), a piece for orchestra and choir performed and commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra of South Africa, music written for the 154 sonnets of William Shakespeare (1990–2000) and *Fuerza Flamenca* (2000).

The ten symphonic poems of *My Mother Persia* are full of melodies, rhythms and improvisations in the styles of Persian traditional music. As a child growing up with this tradition, Rahbari had a chance to learn from the best and most influential Persian maestros.

The support of Hossein Dehlavi, and Gottfried von Einem (one of the most influential professors at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna) helped him to retain the style he had originally created. In 2015, after many years focussing on his conducting career, Rahbari decided to write and dedicate pieces to Iranian maestros such as his colleague Hossein Alizadeh and Hossein Dehlavi.

Symphonic Poem No. 9 'Nohe Khan' (version for baritone saxophone and orchestra)

Nohe Khan was originally written 1972 as a violin concerto, and in 2018 was arranged for baritone saxophone and orchestra. Nohe Khan is the name for the singer, usually a tenor, who sings in various religious ceremonies. They mostly sing in a sad, melancholic and emotional style, with an authentic Persian rhythm which is repeated in the Mass. The Day of Ashoura is probably the busiest day for the Nohe Khan, as Ashoura is the day on which the grandchild of the Prophet Mohammad, Imam Hossein, was killed. On this day Muslims around the world organise a ceremony from morning until noon to mourn him.

Symphonic Poem No. 10 'Morshed'

Dedicated to Ahmad Pejman

Nowadays, a 'Morshed' is a person who has a good singing voice and sits in their special place (named a 'dam'), playing and singing during the *pahlevani* and *zoorkhaneh* rituals (the UNESCO-designated name for *varzesh-e pahlavāni*, or 'ancient sport'). The Morshed performs individual pieces of music for each part of the sport, and also sings martial songs and poems. He synchronises the songs with the athletes' movements, motivating them to higher physical prowess. The poems are mostly selected

from the *Shahnameh* ('The Book of Kings'), written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi. In the past, the Morshed was the person who trained the athletes. During the rituals, the Morshed wears a piece of cloth on his shoulder named 'long' and takes a piece of wood called a 'ta'limi' and guides the athletes during the sports. Morshed were originally selected from the most agile and trained athletes. Morshed are today given the title of *Zarbgir*.

Barbad Bayat

④ Symphonic Poem No. 10 'Morshed'

In the name of the creator of the sun and the moon, whose glory is revealed to your heart by your reason.
In the name of the creator of existence and of righteousness, which does not permit you to lie.
I have suffered a lot during the last thirty years, and I revived Iran and Iranian history and culture with Persian speech.
Mighty is everyone who knows the creator of this world, and his knowledge rejuvenates the hearts of old people.
The initial required knowledge is about the creator of this world, knowing where he is and where he would be.
In the name of the creator of the soul and intelligence, beyond which the mind cannot go.
The creator of glory, the creator of the world, the creator of fortune, the one who sends the prophets.
The creator of Saturn and the rotation of the spheres, which lit the moon and the morning star, and the sun.
A smart person who tries to know the creator of this world is always thankful and grateful to the creator this world.
I asked a kind preacher, who was tactful, old and experienced.
Who is closer than us to the master in this world?
The kind preacher answered, you have to get required knowledge if you want to know the creator of this world.
In this world, there is nothing more precious than helping human beings; therefore, there is no challenge between you and your findings.
When you know and find out the creator of this world, you will not encounter any fear.

Ferdowsi Tusi, c. 940–1020

*Translation: Alireza Rouhpour
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Reza Fekri



The tenor Reza Fekri (b. 1992 in Tehran, Iran) studied economics while simultaneously pursuing his music career, appearing with various choruses. As a tenor soloist he has appeared in *Carmina Burana* and *Alamdar* with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alexander Rahbari. He has also appeared in Dvořák's *Requiem* with the Iranian Philharmonic Association and as a soloist with the choir of the Cultural Association of Iran and Austria (OKF). Other engagements include appearances with the Niavaran and Avasa Choirs performing works by Mozart, Bizet, Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi, Schubert, and many others.

Julia Kräuter



Harpist Julia Kräuter was born in 1995 in Carinthia, Austria and had her first harp lesson at the age of six with Renate Altmann. Between 2003 and 2012 she won many prizes at state and national competitions as a soloist, as well as in different chamber music ensembles. She studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and the University of Music Würzburg. In 2016, success at the Musica Juventutis competition led to her debut as a soloist at the Wiener Konzerthaus. Her debut at the Wiener Musikverein followed in 2019, in connection with the *Jeunesse Start up!* concert series.

Kiril Stoyanov



Percussionist Kiril Stoyanov was born in 1985 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He has won awards for composition and percussion at multiple international competitions. Stoyanov studied at the Mozarteum University Salzburg and the Bulgarian National Academy of Music. He has participated in masterclasses in many countries, and currently teaches in Bratislava, Salzburg and Sofia. Stoyanov has appeared as a soloist with the Philharmonie Salzburg for over a decade, and since 2012 has served as timpanist and percussionist with the Slovak Philharmonic. He has performed alongside ensemble Il Giardino Armonico as well as eminent artists such as Cecilia Bartoli and André Previn.

Parviz Yahyavi



Parviz Yahyavi was born into a military family, and due to familial restrictions, studied percussion, two Persian folk instruments and played in the various folk bands in secret. Yahyavi studied violin and composition at the Tehran Conservatory of Music and the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine, where he was introduced to the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine through Vitaliy Protasov. Yahyavi has been hugely influenced by Alexander Rahbari, who mentored him in conducting. As well as Alexander Rahbari, Yahyavi has also accompanied Valery Gergiev and Leopold Hager in various rehearsals and has worked with youth and state orchestras in Ukraine as a guest conductor.

Prague Metropolitan Orchestra

The Prague Metropolitan Orchestra was founded in 2002 with the vision of creating an ensemble specialising in recording soundtracks for motion pictures. The members of the orchestra are selected players from major Prague-based symphony and opera orchestras including the Czech Philharmonic, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Symphony Orchestra and the National Theatre Orchestra.

Alexander Rahbari



Persian-Austrian conductor and composer Alexander Rahbari studied in Vienna with Hans Swarovsky and Gottfried von Einem. At the age of 23 his violin concerto, *Nohe Khan*, received the special prize of the Academy of Music in Vienna and was performed in the Vienna Concert Hall. He wrote the following pieces in parallel with his conducting career: *Persian Mysticism*, *Music for Human Rights (Hunger in Africa)*, *Beirut* for nine flutes, *Half Moon*, *Musical Sister Angelica Extasy 1* and *Mr. Gianni Extasy 2*, 154 songs on the complete sonnets of Shakespeare,

La Fuerza Flamenca (ten pieces for men's choir and orchestra) and *My Mother Persia*. 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 and the Silver Medal the following year 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 Karajan invited him to be his assistant and substitute at the Salzburg Easter Festival. Rahbari has served as principal guest conductor of the Belgian Radio And Television Philharmonic Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic and the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, and music director of the Brussels, Málaga and Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestras, Virtuosi di Praga and the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted over 120 orchestras globally, and has worked with countless acclaimed soloists such as Mischa Maisky, Henryk Szeryng, Mstislav Rostropovich, Radovan Vlatković, Leonid Kogan, Heinrich Schiff, Nigel Kennedy, Shlomo Mintz, Krystian Zimerman, Radu Lupu, Maurice André and Grace Bumbry.



Ladislav Fančovič

Slovak pianist Ladislav Fančovič (b. 1980) studied at the Bratislava Conservatory, the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. A prizewinner at many prestigious international competitions, he is today a performer with a discography of over 20 albums. Fančovič performs worldwide, regularly appearing with Czech, Slovak and European orchestras under conductors such as Ondrej Lenárd, Alexander Rahbari and Jack Martin Händler. As a soloist, his repertoire includes rarities by composers such as Dohnányi, Godowsky and Kahn. He has also partnered with violinist Milan Pala on a growing series of recordings of the complete works for violin and piano by composers such as Beethoven, Brahms and Grieg. Fančovič is a member of chamber ensembles the Hugo Kauder Trio and The Berger Trio, who in 2015 released Roman Berger's *Pathétique* on Naxos (8.573406). Fančovič is the founder of his own swing orchestra, the Fats Jazz Band, and in 2014 established the Saxophone Syncopators quartet.

www.fanzowitz.com

Alexander Rahbari's *My Mother Persia* is a cycle of symphonic poems suffused with the rich melodies, rhythms and improvisations of Persian traditional music in which he is profoundly versed both as composer and conductor. Originally written as a violin concerto, *Symphonic Poem No. 9 'Nohe Khan'* – the name relates to a singer at religious ceremonies – was recast for baritone saxophone in 2018. *Symphonic Poem No. 10 'Morshed'* vividly explores ritualised song in the context of 'ancient sport'. *Volume 1* is on 8.574064 and *Volume 2* on 8.574065.

Alexander
RAHBARI

(b. 1948)

My Mother Persia • 3

Symphonic Poem No. 9 'Nohe Khan'

version for baritone saxophone and orchestra (2018)
(adapted from the violin concerto *Nohe Khan*, 1972)

38:00

1 I. Lento – Allegro

24:18

2 II. Andante

4:18

3 III. Allegro molto

9:23

4 Symphonic Poem No. 10 'Morshed' (2019)

Text: Ferdowsi Tusi (c. 940–1020)

19:05

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

**Ladislav Fančovič, Baritone saxophone 1–3,
C melody saxophone 4**

Reza Fekri, Tenor 4 • Julia Kräuter, Harp 4

Kiril Stoyanov, Marimba, Vibraphone, Percussion 4

Parviz Yahyavi, Zurkhaneh tombak, Daf 4

Prague Metropolitan Orchestra 1–3 • Alexander Rahbari

English translations of the Farsi sung texts can be found inside the booklet,
and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/574208.htm

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