

ARTS & CULTURE BEAT

By Staff Writer Masa Zokaei

BIJAN CONCERT THIS WEEKEND

This Saturday, October 8, at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, in Orange County, California, BIJAN MORTAZAVI will perform in concert with new artist, MEHRNOOSH. The singer, composer, and musician says, "I haven't performed in OC in so long. We usually do concerts in Los Angeles and count Orange County as a part of that, but it's totally different from LA. I decided to do it there this time." Expect a big orchestra with percussion, keyboards and guitars and new compositions. Mehnoosh, a young female vocalist, will be opening the show.

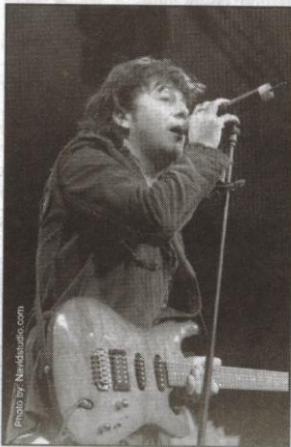


SHAHLA DORRIZ DESIGNS IN NY, MARY APICK EARNS AWARD

Designers SHAHLA and ALEXANDRE DORRIZ from Beverly Hills featured their designs last weekend at the Persian Parade 8th annual fashion show fundraiser at Neiman Marcus in Westfield Garden State Plaza in New York. This year's theme was "Jewelry and Fur" it was said to be successful for fundraising efforts. That same night actress and activist MARY APICK, who made positive films for kids and who advocated for women's rights all over the world, was awarded a special honor by Persian Parade for her work.

FARSHID AMIN SINGS IN ENGLISH, MANSOUR CHANGES UP HIS STYLE

Iranian composer and singer FARSHID AMIN, is releasing two more songs in English and has plans to create an American album. Amin wrote a song in 2008 which he performed at the gala for Barack Obama called "Pray with me". Pop Singer MANSOUR has created some songs in Azari, the Turkish language spoke in Iran. One such song that has been getting a lot of play online is "Bari Bakh & Sakineh Dai Gizi." He said he is going in a new direction with his music, as he also recently released a song that has a country music touch.



FARED SHAFINURY PERFORMS IN SAN FRANCISCO

The De Young Fine Arts Museum in San Francisco welcomes FARED SHAFINURY October 14 at 7:00pm for a concert entitled "From Texas to Tehran." Born in the beach town of Corpus Christie, and given a santur by his father at the age of 12, Shafinury became classically trained in the style of "radiff". He composes music based on poems by Hafez, Saadi, Sohrab Sepehri, and Forugh Farokhzad and his sound is influenced by Classical Iranian music as well as American folk. Fared Shafinury LIVE at De Young Musseum, Golden Gate Park, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, San Francisco, CA. Admission is Free. www.deyoungmuseum.org for info



I AM NEDA FILM WINS WITH AUDIENCES

Nicole Sadighi started off as an actress and has recently become a director for the first time, for a project she just couldn't see anyone else doing. When the world first heard of Neda (full name Neda Agha-Soltan) in 2009, she was known as a martyr for freedom, a symbol for the green movement in Iran. What many do not know is what led up to that day in June 2009. That is the story Sadighi is set out to tell.

JAVANAN: What made you want to tell this story about Neda? What made you want to direct the film?

Nicole Sadighi: I researched the story and I got to know the story and realized nobody else has gotten into it as much as I have. I thought it was a big job in itself to get a director or a write on board to do it. It became a vision in my head and I felt that I had to do it. It's not really a control thing, although it seems that way. It's such an important piece that I didn't want it to be interpreted by someone else; that would be different from how I envisioned it. It's like having a baby you want to nurture it yourself- it's hard to let someone else take care of your baby.



J: Where did you film the project?

NS: We filmed in Burbank and Van Nuys. It amazing how much Van Nuys can look like Tehran if you want it to.

J: Is this a short film?

NS: It's a short film, 21 minutes. It's basically about her life more than her death. Although her death is sadly what she became famous for. Even a short movie is a big project and this is the first time I've been on the other side of the camera.

I had an epiphany about telling this story about the moments that let up to the point where she decided that she would go to the event that day. I had to find out as much as I could when I didn't have access to talk to her family.

I saw a documentary with one-on-one interviews with her family. They gave so much information about the dialogue leading up on that day. I used a lot of that as the meat and bones on the script. It was kind of effortless to write this; Neda really wrote the story for me. I can't take the credit.

J: How has the reaction been to the film?

NS: The reaction has been positive. I've had people coming up to me telling me how they felt when they saw the movie. People speak to me about specific points. People tell me they cried at certain parts and felt a certain emotion. That's how I felt when I wrote it.

My number one audience is her family. The more I learned about it, the more it became a tribute to her and her message, and that was the driving force. I wanted her family to be proud. It's not just the YouTube video that people see. It's become alive.

I Am Neda was screened at The Santa Rosa International Film Festival as an official selection in the Cinema of Conscience Category and was invited to screen at the ARPA International festival.