

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
Kimberly Burns/510.643.6714
kburns@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Christina Kellogg/510.642.9121
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS
A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF MIDDLE EASTERN MUSIC WITH
THE MASTERS OF PERSIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, January 3, 2005 — Four of Iran's finest musical virtuosos return to Zellerbach Hall to showcase the rich heritage of Persian classical music as well as ancient Sufi and contemporary poetry on **Sunday, February 27 at 7 p.m.** The Grammy-nominated ensemble features super-star singer **Mohammed Reza Shajarian**; *kamancheh* (spiked fiddle) virtuoso **Kayhan Kalhor**; *tar* (plucked lute) and *setar* (Iranian sitar) master **Hossein Alizadeh** and Shajarian's son, **Homayoun** on the *tombak* (hand drum). The Masters of Persian Classical Music will perform a program of all new material.

MOHAMMAD REZA SHAJARIAN

Mohammad Reza Shajarian, the undisputed master of classical Persian singing, is regarded as a national treasure in Iran. He is perhaps Iran's most diverse and prolific singer of all time and has a huge repertoire of recorded works. In Iranian music, traditional singing is considered one of the most difficult arts to master. Motivated by his own deep spirituality, Shajarian combines classical songs and *radif*, a classical repertoire passed down orally from master to student, with improvisation to create music that is rooted in tradition and expressive of the singer's own moods. Shajarian is widely considered the embodiment of the perfect singer and a major source of inspiration to other musicians. In 1999, UNESCO presented him with the prestigious Picasso Medal and in 2000, the Iranian Ministry of Culture declared him the best classical vocalist.

Born in 1940 in the northeastern city of Mashhad, Iran, Shajarian began singing at the age of five under the supervision of his father. At twelve, he began studying with the great masters Ahmad Ebadi and Esmaeel Mehrtash, learning the vocal styles of singers from previous generations. He soon started playing the *santur* (hammered dulcimer) in order to better understand and perform the traditional repertoire. He rose to prominence in the 1960s with his

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distinct style of singing, at once technically flawless, powerful, and intensely emotional. Since then, he has had an illustrious career teaching at Tehran University's Department of Fine Arts, working at the National Iranian Radio and Television Orchestra, researching Iranian music, and making numerous recordings. He performs regularly in Iran and throughout the world.

HOSSEIN ALIZADEH

Hossein Alizadeh, born in Tehran in 1951, studied at the School of Music of the University of Tehran and received his bachelor's degree in 1975. While pursuing his formal education he also studied *radif* with various masters such as Houshang Zarif, Ali Akbar Shahnazi and Yousef Foroutan. Upon the completion of his studies, he became the conductor, *setar* (Persian sitar) and *tar* (plucked lute) soloist for the National Orchestra of Radio and Television of Iran. In the 1980s, he furthered his musical education by studying composition and musicology at the University of Berlin.

In 2000, the Iranian Ministry of Culture declared him the best contemporary artist. As a teacher he has trained many young musicians and has written and published a number of etudes for *tar* and *setar*. He has composed many groundbreaking works of contemporary and neo-classical Iranian music and recorded the entire body of the *radif* based on the interpretation of Mirza Abdollah. Alizadeh performs extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia and has appeared on many radio and television programs around the world. He has taught at the University of Tehran, the Tehran Music Conservatory and the California Institute of the Arts.

KAYHAN KALHOR

Well-known for having performed with Yo-Yo Ma's *Silk Road Project*, **Kayhan Kalhor** is a virtuoso on the *kamancheh* (a bowed, spiked fiddle that is played on the lap or while kneeling on the floor and has a distinctive nasal sound). He was born in Tehran in 1963 and began his musical studies by age seven. A child prodigy, he was invited to work with the National Orchestra of Radio and Television of Iran, where he performed for five years, when he was just thirteen.

At seventeen he began playing with the most prestigious arts organization in Iran while continuing to study *radif* with different masters. In his extensive travels throughout Iran, Kahor learned and incorporated the musical traditions of different regions including Khorasan and

Kurdistan into his own music. He later studied Western classical music in Rome, Italy and Ottawa, Canada. He has composed for some of Iran's best-known performers as well as for the Kronos Quartet and Yo-Yo Ma. Kahor has toured the world as a soloist and with ensembles performing Persian and Indian improvisations. *The New York Times* called him, "a fiery improviser who moves from sighing, songful lines to fiercely percussive pizzicato fusillades and swirling arpeggios."

HOMAYOUN SHAJARIAN

Homayoun Shajarian, born in 1975, is the son of master vocalist Mohammad Reza Shajarian. He began playing *tombak* at the age of five. He later attended the Tehran Conservatory of Music. In addition to the *tombak*, Homayoun plays the *kamancheh* and studies vocal tradition with his father. Since 1991 he has played in a vast array of ensembles in Europe, Iran and the United States. His last tour with this ensemble marked his first as a vocalist. As a student of his father, Homayoun has developed many similar vocal qualities and will continue a new generation of the great Persian vocal tradition.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Masters of Persian Classical Music** on **Sunday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$24.00, \$36.00, and \$48.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Sunday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Masters of Persian Classical Music

Mohammed Reza, Shajarian, *vocals*

Kayhan Kalhor, *kamancheh*

Hossein Alizadeh, *tar and setar*

Homayoun Shajarian, *tombak*

Program:

Tickets: \$24.00, \$36.00, \$48.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.