

DEEYAH PRESENTS

# IRANIAN WOMAN



## FUUSE MOUSIQI: WOMAN SERIES

***Many say that life entered the human body by the help of music, but the truth is that life itself is music.***

– HAFEZ

Traditional music speaks to the deepest levels of cultural belonging, reaching to the very heart and soul of the identity and experience of a people. Women in every corner of the world are often the carriers of culture and have long transmitted their ancestral wisdoms through the stories and poetry of the songs of their land.

Women continue to carry that culture into the contemporary era, singing new life into folk traditions, classical modes and ancient melodies, infusing them with modern realities, rooted in common identities in the soil and the unique history of their peoples.

The Fuuse Mousiqi WOMAN series presents the voices and music of contemporary women who are the artistic bearers of their indigenous and ancestral forms of music and heritage. It is a celebration of the female voice, the voice of mother, sister, daughter, the voice of history, of nature, creativity, life, compassion and the future.

Founded by Norwegian/Pakistani/Afghan artist, Deeyah, a film and music maker, Fuuse Mousiqi is a music company with a social conscience, born out of the union of a passion for music, art and activism. The inspiration and purpose behind Fuuse Mousiqi is to explore the intersections of self-expression and activism, realising that every act of self-expression has a political and universal dimension – that whether raised in speech or song, our voices are the source of our power.

Produced by Deeyah, Iranian Woman is the second music collection in the ongoing WOMAN series dedicated to celebrating traditional music forms as expressed through women's voices and women's artistry.

***Women have much to say through music that the world needs to hear and that men cannot say for them.***

– CLARA LYLE BOONE

## FOREWORD BY DEEYAH

***I want to sing like the birds sing, not worrying about who hears or what they think.***

– RUMI

As a lifelong devotee of the South Asian classical music form of Khayal from India and Pakistan, I have deep admiration for the art, intricacy and beauty of Persian classical music. Being intimately familiar with the discipline of one ancient traditional music form, it was natural for me to explore its sister form from Persia. In medieval times, the melodic systems of Indian music were fused with ideas from the Persian so the music I studied was born out of a cultural synthesis of several musical traditions: Vedic ritual chants, the ancient Persian tradition of Mossighi e Sonnat, and various folk traditions from the Indus Valley.

As an admirer and a believer in the voice of woman, it is my joy and privilege to voyage through the traditional music forms of Iran on the vessel of the voices of remarkable women.

From ancient times, women of Iran have expressed the stories of their people through song, folklore and mythology, as well as being 'half the sky' of history. The strength, passion, clarity and power of women's voices raised in traditional forms of song, carrying women's histories and experiences is as relevant today as it was a thousand years ago.

As the figurine on the cover of IRANIAN WOMAN, from the First Millennium BC shows, Iranian women have been singing for more than 3000 years.

The first song a human-being hears is the voice of a woman, a lullaby from a mother to her child. The woman's voice and her song is a sacred blessing of nature, natural and forever. To silence the female voice is like trying to prevent the sun from shining, or stopping the moon from dressing the night sky or stopping the river from flowing. To stop nature from breathing the song of life is impossible. It is not for the hands of human beings to lock-up and steal the sound of life and the heartbeat of nature.

I carry a profound sustaining belief in the prospect of a better world for women to one day fulfill the yearning for self-expression, equality of opportunity, protection and human dignity, for love and basic rights. The experiences, struggles and songs of our foremothers are part of our history. Their creativity and hopes make our present possible, and their strength is a blessing and inspiration for our future.

The WOMAN series is my way of honouring and celebrating women, and my personal exploration through the indigenous and traditional music of their lands. This anthology forms a tribute to the women of Iran especially their courage, and to the exquisite and rich musical heritage of Iran. It is with pride, humility and a deep sense of gratitude and admiration, that I present the voices of contemporary Iranian women.



# THE MUSIC

At the heart of Persian Classical music is melody and improvisation and the sound of the human voice. Men and women have raised those voices in an evolving tradition for almost 3000 years. The singer chooses a mood and then uses a specific *dastgah* or mode that will bring the mood to life. She often chooses the poetry as well, as poetry is also central to this art form. It is the accomplishment of entwining music and words, often in the service of an expanded mystical state of mind, that is regarded as the highest form of the art. Though linked to Indian, Byzantine, Turkish and Arabic music, Persian (or interchangeably, Iranian) music is a self-contained system.

The music is monophonic – each instrument is an ensemble following one melody. Microtones divide the music into more than twelve semi-tones and some say the notion of a scale is entirely Western and doesn't describe what is happening in Persian music – that the important structure is the melodic formula, which is modal. The repertoire of Persian art music together with its traditional order of classification is called the *Radif*. The *Radif* is fundamentally a repertoire of melodies that have been collected by different people and added to the repertory at different times. It is made up of traditional melodies. Many are derived from popular and folk sources, though the specific origins have been obscured by the passage of time. These melodies have been preserved and transmitted from generation to generation. The position of each melody in the *Radif* is determined by its modal characteristics. There are two kinds of *Radif*, instrumental *Radif* and vocal *Radif*. Instrumental *Radif* is designed for the techniques and temperaments of the different instruments. The

vocal *Radif* contain words and was designed for the human voice and singing techniques. A musician must master the full *Radif* before truly being able to sing or play.

The main instruments used are the *tombak*, an open-bottomed drum carved from a single piece of wood; the *tar*, a fretted long-necked lute of wood and sheepskin; the *setar*, a four-stringed wooden lute with a long neck, the *ney*, a vertical reed flute, the *santur*, a hammered dulcimer, the *kamancheh*, a bowed string instrument related to the bowed rebab and the ancient *daf* frame drum.

'Mossighi e Sonnat', 'traditional' or 'old' music has gone through many changes. The poetry was once religious texts and became almost entirely the beloved mystical medieval poets like Saadi, Hafez and Rumi. Now, more contemporary poetry is being used as well. For a hundred years under Arabic domination the music was suppressed and currently there is much political confusion around the music again. Since the Iranian revolution, women who are vocalists are only permitted to perform for all-female audiences

Though the art of music in Iran has suffered persecution through parts of its existence, it has an even stronger history of surviving and finding a way towards life because the artists serve, shelter, preserve and transmit this exquisite music throughout time. It continues to live and expand as master artists, such as the women presented here, who have devotedly maintained and expanded the tradition, perform all over the world.

# MAHSA VAHDAT



*For me singing is complete happiness and freedom, a devotional moment that comes from a very sincere feeling inside me. Singing is a blessing.*

In Tehran, Mahsa Vahdat began learning music from an early age. She took piano lessons and received Persian singing instruction from various musicians in Iran learning the setar, singing, and eventually composing. At the University of Arts in Tehran, she graduated with a B.A. in Music.

Since 1995, Mahsa has performed as an independent solo singer in many concerts and festivals in Asia, Europe, the United States and Africa with musicians from Iran, Europe and America.

In 2004, the Norwegian label Kirkelig Kulturverksted released *Lullabies from the Axis of Evil*, from which enthusiasm for her work led to a world-wide release of a series of recordings, including *A Deeper Tone of Longing*, *Twinklings of Hope*, and with the Norwegian choir Skruk, *In the Mirror of Wine*, *I am Eve*, and *Songs from a Persian Garden*.

Mahsa is one of the ambassadors of Freemuse, an independent international organization that advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide. ([www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org)). In 2010, she was honored with the Freemuse Award.

She gives singing lessons in her home city of Tehran and offers music workshops in many parts of the world.

## Sorrowful Spring

The spring came, but it brought no Jonquil or flower,  
Brought no breeze with the scent of the feast of Norouz  
The swallow came, but it brought no flower  
Why is the flower not a companion of the swallow?  
What has happened to this garden?  
What made it forget the rites of the spring?  
Why is blood dripping from the spray of flowers?  
What has happened? Where has the voice of the nightingale gone?  
What is this woe? What is this woe?  
What brought disturbance to our garden?  
Why is blood dripping from the spray of flowers?  
What has happened? Where has the voice of the nightingale gone?

Poem by Hoshang Ebtehaj (contemporary poet)

Music by Atabak Elyasi

Melody by Deylaman Gooshe in Persian vocal Radif

Musicians:

**Shervin Mohajer**

**Shahram Gholami**

**Reza Asgarzadeh**

**Babak Abaee**

**Ali Rahimi**

Produced by Atabak Elyasi

Composition & lyrics by Atabak Elyasi / Hoshang Ebtehaj

Published by Kirkelig Kulturverksted AS

From the album *I am Eve*

ISRC: NOFK0807060

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Photo by Barbro Steinde

# MAMAK KHADEM



*I am silenced, call out my name  
From your grief, bring me release*

Called "one of the wonders of world trance music" by the Los Angeles Times, Mamak Khadem draws from her roots in the ancient poetry and music of the Persian masters, creating a bold and revolutionary new sound. Co-founder and longtime lead vocalist of the acclaimed world fusion ensemble Axiom of Choice, the powerful Tehran-born singer has created a vibrant body of work that she hopes will inspire a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity in general, and for Persian arts in particular, at a time when the great beauty of Iran's culture is too often eclipsed by its present-day politics.

The classically trained Khadem has studied her art extensively in both Iran and the United States. Her latest work, *A Window To Color*, is a conceptual album of eight original compositions inspired by the poetry of Iran's late, gifted poet and artist, Sohrab Sepehri. Her expressive, moving voice has been heard on numerous film and television scores. Khadem tours and performs globally, and resides in Los Angeles, where she teaches classical Persian music and conducts workshops, which incorporate singing, meditation and movement.

## **Bigharar (Restless Yearning)**

I am in turmoil by your departure  
Wanderer I have become  
Bewildered and confused

O Beloved  
O beautiful lover of broken hearts  
Return to me, please return

In loneliness, let me be remembered  
I am silenced, call out my name  
From your grief, bring me release

The pain of loneliness is mine  
The sorrow of disgrace is mine  
Passion and lovesickness, all mine

Restless my sleep, beyond words my grief  
Alone I lie at night  
In the embrace of your apparition

Musicians:

**Mamak Khadem**  
**Omar Faruk Tekbilek**  
**Roubik Haroutunian**  
**Marc Shulman**  
**Benjamin Wittma**

Produced by Jamshied Sharifi  
Composition & lyrics by Mamak Khadem / Siroos Jamali  
Published by JOSTOJOO  
From the album *JOSTOJOO Forever Seeking*  
ISRC: 37101392617  
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Photograph provided by Mamak Khadem

# YASNA



*Where is our knowledge and wisdom?  
Why did we lose and forget our motherland?*

Born in Tehran, Yasna learned the Radif – the traditional Persian repertoire – in the central mountains of Iran. First under Iran's preeminent female vocalist, Parissa, she concentrated on vocal music and then with Mohsen Kermati, she focused on the styles of previous generations. With Master Hasan Kasaee, she learned many early Persian songs that are the musical expression of the Shiite Renaissance, the Maktabe Isfahan. This tradition emphasizes the mystical experience, connecting the ancient Persian spiritual traditions with Islam. A different interpretation of the Radif was passed to Yasna by Shahram Nazeri.

She studied the sitar with Master Mohammed Reza Ebrahimi, the tonbak with Master Saegh Tarif and music theory with Reza Abaee.

Yasna has performed every year in the Fajr Music Festival and regularly in universities in Tehran and at Khajeh Nasir. Yasna performs in Iran for private audiences and has given concerts in Germany and France. She teaches traditional and folk music, so the next generation may find their own voices within it.

## **Atash e Tabnak (Bright Fire)**

I wish to put incense in the fire, and awaken my wisdom.

O cupbearer, you are the only person who can help me,  
because I have no other choice but to drink.  
I am tired of this world, and want to go to the temple of the Magi to  
pray.

O cupbearer, do not go far from the temple of the Magi,  
because at the temple of the Magi  
You shall find the treasure that every human being wants to have.

O cupbearer, bring me that life-giving wine so I may find the courage to  
ride Rakhsh.  
I want the bravery that Rostam had. I want to become like Rostam and  
do as he did.

O cupbearer, bring me the wine glass that is full of wine;  
I want to drink and tell the story of Kasra and Kay.  
Bring me the wine and let me listen to the song of the ney,  
let me tell the story of our ancient Kings, Kaykavous and Jamsheed,  
and listen to the song of the ney.

### **Note:**

Rakhsh was the famous horse of Rostam the mythical Iranian  
hero of Shahnameh. Kasra and Kay were ancient Iranian kings.

Musician:  
**Yasna**

Produced by Yasna  
Composition & lyrics by Yasna / Esmail Sarkhosh  
Published by Zagros  
From the album *Ganje Baadavard*  
ISRC: 37101392617  
Licensed from: Yasna  
© Zagros  
Photograph provided by Yasna

# PARISSA



*If you awaken to the light of the guidance of the heart  
You will joyfully offer your head in devotion*  
– Hafez

Parissa is widely regarded as Iran's foremost female vocalist. She is a master of the Radif, the classical Persian repertoire. This traditional musical style is based on improvisation within a modal structure known as dastgah where the performer's skill rests in the extemporaneous vocal ornamentation of the basic melodic framework.

Born Fatemeh Vaezi, Parissa started her musical work under the renowned Persian Radif teacher, Mahmoud Karimi, with whom she studied for ten years at the National Music Conservatory in Tehran.

Two years into her studies there, she was invited by the Ministry of Culture to work at National Radio and Television Broadcasting.

Karimi once commented: "Parisa is my most promising pupil ... she can sing all the modes with the skill of re-interpretation or improvisation ..."

Parissa's musical talent truly blossomed when she was introduced to The Iranian Center for Preservation and Dissemination of Music, where Dariush Safvat and the teachings of Ostad Elahi connected Parissa to the spiritual wellsprings of her music. Her recordings of this period show a tremendous depth and growth in her musical understanding. After the Iranian revolution, this conservatory was abolished and she continued her education in private lessons with Karimi.

She has performed in many parts of the world, in Asia and Europe, to much acclaim and appreciation. Since 1995, she has been performing in collaboration with different musicians in various festivals and concerts around the world.

As the mother of three children and a growing number of grandchildren, she brings a generational sensibility to her work. In recent years, Parissa has been concentrating on teaching and guiding young talents. She currently lives in Tehran, Iran.

## Mathnavi

I am such a one that the tavern-corner is the cloister of mine:  
The prayer from the Pir of Moghan is the morning task of mine.

[Although the melody of the harp of the morning is not mine, what fear?  
At morning-time – my cry is the excuse – utterer of mine.]

[Of the king and of the beggar, I am free. Thank goodness!  
The beggar of the dust of the Friend's door is king of mine!]

Through the tavern and the Masjed, my desire is union with Thee:  
Save this, no desire have I. God is the witness of mine!

[Perhaps, with death's sword, I may take up my tent. If not,  
Turning from the door of fortune is not the custom of mine.]

From that time when I placed my face on that threshold of Thine,,  
The sun's high throne has been the pillow of mine.

Hafez! Though sin is not our choice,  
Strive for manners; and say: The sin is of mine.

Lyrics from a poem by Hafez (1317–1390 C.E.)

Musicians:  
**Dastan Ensemble**

Produced by Dieter Hauer  
Composition & lyrics by Abdel Halim Hafez / Rumi / Said Farajpoori  
Published by Network Germany  
From the album *Shoorideh*  
ISRC: DEU241124658  
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Photograph provided by Parissa



# SEPIDEH RAISSADAT



*Do not give up on love.*

Persian classical vocalist and musician Sepideh Raissadat began her recording career at the age of 18, which is no small feat considering singing in public has been forbidden for women in her native Iran since the 1979 revolution. In 2000, Sepideh was the first female vocalist to have a solo public performance in Iran.

With such a dynamic beginning, and having studied with many of the musical greats – such as Iranian Diva, Parisa and renowned masters Parviz Meshkatian and Mohammad-Reza Lotfi, Sepideh continued her musical studies at the University of Bologna, in Italy. This led to numerous collaborations and performances in Europe, notably with Italian musicians Franco Battiato, Andrea Parodi and Ensemble Maraghi. She has since garnered many invitations by prestigious institutions, including UNESCO, the Vatican and international media such as BBC and RAI.

With three critically acclaimed CDs of her own: *Tales of Friendship*, *14 Cheerful Pieces (Bazparidan)*, *Anwar*, *From Samarkand to Constantinople on the Footsteps of Maraghi* and guest appearances on numerous albums, she is currently based in Toronto, continuing her academic studies in Ethnomusicology at the University of Toronto.

## Na're-ye Showgh

Never did I imagine winning your friendship  
Never do I believe I am the one by your side now

Tell the town's wise man to preach me not for I shall hear him not  
Tell the tavern keeper to repent me not for I shall only break it

If stabbed with a dagger so I seek her no more  
My last breath of life will be a cry of joy

What is but foolishness repenting from the love of the beloved?  
What is but black-heartedness abandoning this love?

Vigor and wisdom were what I possessed,  
And a heart  
Now all set afire by your love

Poem by Sa'di Shirazi (1210–1291)  
English translation by Lida Nosrati

Musicians:  
**Iman Vaziri**  
**Ali Rahimi**

Produced by Sepideh Raissadat  
Composition & lyrics by Iman Vaziri / Sa'adi  
Published by Sepideh Raissadat.  
From the album *Tale of Friendship*  
Licensed from Sepideh Raissadat  
© Iman Vaziri  
Photo by Roshanak

# NAGHMEH GHOLAMI



*O Heart! Look to the sun in the cold night  
As fire arising from the ashen light...  
A cypress raised from every blossoming heart  
On each one a bird singing in freedom*

Naghmeh Gholami was born in Tehran and showed a talent for singing at the age of fourteen. She spent several years perfecting her singing skills in the style of Saleh Azimi and, later, under the mentorship of the distinguished Persian music maestro Mohammad Reza Shajarian, whose influence in humanitarian values matches his world-renowned artistry. For the past few years, Naghmeh has been performing with the Naghmeh Ensemble under the directorship of Mrs. D. Azar Hashemi and Vaziri Ensemble under the directorship of Maestro Keivan Saket.

She has cut several CD's with these ensembles as well as performing and teaching Persian Music at many national and international Music Festivals. Her performance at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow in particular, was a highlight, enthusiastically received by audience and critics alike.

An artist with many interests, Naghmeh Gholami holds a degree in graphic design engineering and calligraphy.

## Ballad of Cypress

O Heart! Look to the sun in the cold night  
As fire arising from ashen light

Blooming and rosy is the sky and earth  
From this blood, become a prairie anemone: the universe

Look! While dawn followed these bloody nights  
Many daggers pass through the hearts

A cypress raised from every blossoming heart  
On each one, there is a bird singing freedom

Music of blood is what the bird is singing  
O Heart! The ballad of cypress is what freedom is bringing

Lyrics from a poem by H E Sayeh  
English translation by Dr. Ali Asadi (A.A. Sadeh)

Musicians:  
**Naghmeh Gholami**  
**Kayvan Saket**

Produced by Naghmeh Gholami  
Composition & lyrics by Kayvan Saket / Houshang Ebtehaj (H.E.Sayeh)  
Published by Delbang Music Co.  
From the album *Songs of Kindness*  
Licensed from Dr. Ali Asadi  
© Dr. Ali Asadi  
Photograph provided by Naghmeh Gholami

# AZAM ALI (NIYAZ)



*What intrigues me most about the human voice is its ability to make all things transparent through its power of transformation. The voice is not just a conduit for words. For me it is like an abstract dream in which everything makes perfect sense.*

Azam Ali, was born in Tehran, Iran, grew up in Maharashtra, India and currently resides in Montreal, Canada. There she attended an international co-educational boarding school absorbing India's rich music and culture. That school emphasized arts and spirituality, and aimed to produce promoters of social transformation imbued with the spirit of service to humanity. This has been Azam's mission ever since.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 changed the course of Azam's life. She and her mother moved to America in 1985, where she fell in love with the Persian santour (a hammered dulcimer). She studied under Manoocher Sadeeghi, becoming an accomplished player but when her teacher heard her voice, he encouraged her to become a vocalist. Her vocal career now spans more than a decade and includes twelve collaborative albums and three solo albums. Azam first became internationally recognized for her work with Vas, the best selling world music duo she co-founded in 1996.

Then in 2004 Azam along with collaborators Loga Ramin Torkian and Carmen Rizzo, they formed the now international acoustic/electronic world music group NIYAZ. With three successful albums released to date on Six Degrees Records, Niyaz blends medieval Sufi poetry and folk songs from their native Iran and its surrounding countries in the Persian and Arabian Gulf, with rich acoustic instrumentation and modern electronics. Azam continues to tour with Niyaz internationally and build on its impressive and loyal fan base.

Azam's immense talent and ability to adapt her voice to any musical style have drawn the attention of many diverse artists. Azam has collaborated in studio and on stage with Serj Tankian of System of a Down, The Crystal Method, Pat Mastellato and Trey Gunn of King Crimson, Dredg, Chris Vrenna of Nine Inch Nails, Ben Watkins of Juno Reactor, Buckethead, Steve Stevens, Rhys Fulber of Delerium, Mercan Dede, Kodo, Zakir Hussain, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, and Mickey Hart with whom she also toured for two years as a lead singer in his group Bembe Orisha. Azam has worked with many world renowned film composers, and her distinctive voice can also be heard on myriad film and television scores.

Musicians:

**Azam Ali**  
**Loga Ramin Torkian**  
**Carmen Rizzo**

Produced by Azam Ali, Loga Ramin Torkian and Carmen Rizzo  
Composition & lyrics by Azam Ali, Loga Ramin Torkian, Carmen Rizzo / Traditional  
Published by KarmaTara Music (BMI),  
Nandi Publishing (ASCAP),  
Povilu Music/Chrysalis Music (ASCAP).  
From the album *Niyaz*  
ISRC: US6DR0500790  
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Photograph provided by Azam Ali

## The Hunt

"Let's go to the field."  
"Which field?"  
"The same that has rabbits, oh yes!"  
"And my dog has a rope on its foot, oh yes!"  
"Don't kill my dog on the leash nor my rabbits in the field,

For the dream of the rabbit reminds me of the dream of my lover, oh yes!"

"Let's go to the mountain."  
"Which mountain?"  
"The same that has deer, oh yes!"  
"And my dog has a rope on its foot, oh yes!"  
"Don't kill my dog on the rope, nor my rabbit in the field,  
nor my deer of the mountain,

For the grace of my deer reminds me of the grace of my lover, oh yes!"

"Let's go to the garden."  
"Which garden?"  
"The same that has pheasants, oh yes!"  
"And my dog has a rope on its foot, oh yes!"  
"Don't kill my dog on the leash, nor my rabbit in the field, nor my deer of the mountain, nor my pheasants in the garden,

For the amble of the pheasant reminds me of the amble of my lover, oh yes!"

"Let's go to the well."  
"Which well?"  
"The same that has pigeons, oh yes!"  
"And my dog has a rope on its foot, oh yes!"  
"Don't kill my dog on the leash, nor my rabbit in the field, nor my deer of the mountain, nor my pheasants in the garden, nor my pigeons at the well,

For the flight of the pigeon reminds me of the flight of my lover, oh yes!"

"Let's go to the mountains."  
"Which mountains?"  
"The same that have eagles, oh yes!"  
"And my dog has a rope on its foot, oh yes!"  
"Don't kill my dog on the leash, nor my rabbit in the field, nor my deer of the mountain, nor my pheasants in the garden, nor my pigeons at the well,

For the clutch of the eagle reminds me of the clutch of my lover, oh yes!"

# RAHA



*But what weeping, what storm?  
Silence is a night everywhere alone.*

Raha is a vocalist with the Hamavayan Ensemble, who began her musical studies first with the tasnif forms, slow ballads of rhythmic odes and then went on to mastering the radif, the full-on classical structure. Her first teacher was Master Mahmoud Karimi and then she worked with Parissa, the Persian vocalist who has done so much to foster younger singers, while creating an international career for herself.

Raha continued with Karim Saleh Azimi, learning the radif style of Eghbal Azar and Abdollah Davami. Later she worked with Hossein Alizadeh on principles of Iranian singing and the radif and he asked her to join the highly regarded Hamavayan Ensemble. Through performance with this group, she has been featured in the music for the films *Zir-e Tigh*, *Under the Knife*; *Avaz-e Gonjashkha*, *Song of Sparrows* and *Dar Cheshm-e Bad*, *In the Wind's Eye*. Recordings include *Man Agar Parandeh Budem*, *If I Could Fly* and concerts, *Sorud-e Gol*, *Flower Song* and *Janan*, *Beloved* in their performances in Iran and internationally.

## Moment (Hengaam)

As the instrument weeps  
smoke that echoes the cloud behind it  
indigo as the sea's eye,  
In anger, the fist strikes a face.

From that late journey that left me  
with the woman's flirtatious glance and the instrument's coquetry,  
I have on familiar pretexts  
captured an image of her.

But what weeping, what storm?  
Silence is a night everywhere alone.

A man on the road plays the ney  
and its dejected voice rises.  
I am another one alone, whose eyes  
stir up a storm of tears

As the instrument weeps  
smoke that echoes the cloud behind it  
indigo as the sea's eye,  
In anger, the fist strikes a face.

Lyrics by Nima Youshij

Musicians

**Hossein Alizadeh**  
**Ali Boustan**  
**Siamak Jahangiry**  
**Pouria Akhavass**  
**Ali Rahimi**

Sound engineering by Reza Asgarzadeh  
Composition & lyrics by Hossein Alizadeh / Nima Youshij  
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Photograph provided by Raha



# PARI ISAZADEH



Pari Isazadeh's talent was discovered when she was only a child. Her father initiated her into the rich tradition of Persian music with its ancient singing styles and folk music. Soon she was singing avaz – ancient Persian blues, and tasnif in complicated scales with quarter tones, typical in traditional Persian music. At seven, Pari started to perform on Iranian radio and won many talent competitions.

Pari moved to Sweden in 1985 after her studies in USA. In the last decennium, Pari has concentrated on her studies at the university and resumed her career as composer/singer/songwriter. Beside her work as psychologist she has performed a number of concerts in Swedish Radio, Re-Orient Festival, Uppsala Concert Hall, Stallet, Västerås Concert Hall and Stockholm Concert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, to mention a few.

Pari writes her own music in a very personal style. Her music has its roots in two-thousand-year-old Persian music with influences from folk music originated from different parts of the world. Especially close to her heart is music from her birth place, the ancient city of Dezful, with its rich music tradition as well as music from Azerbaijan, Khorasan, Kurdistan, Afghanistan and Swedish folk music. Her band Pari Isazadeh Ensemble consists of musicians from the Persian and Swedish music elites.

Folk song from Dezful

Musicians:

**Hassan Moghaddam**  
**Moshtagh Feizyabi**  
**Mohammad Khaladyan**  
**Jamal Mohammadi**

Produced by Pari Isazadeh, Shadzi  
Composition & Lyrics by Traditional  
Published by Pari Isazadeh / Shadzi.  
From the album *From Dezful to Dalarna*  
ISRC: SE3PD1300101  
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Photo by Christer Folkesson / sinduda.se

## **Dokhtar Maret Mana (Girl! May your mother live long)**

*I combined two old folk songs from Dezful to create a new version. I learned them from my grandmother, as she learned them from her ancestors to keep the culture alive.*

In Abbas village we have a millstone  
its rent is a small bowl of yogurt  
hey you pretty girl,  
don't spin the heavy handle to the left,  
to the left don't turn it  
you'll break the handle!  
Oh girl, may your mother live long  
you took my heart  
and burned it with your charcoal black eyes  
come close my darling, I want to see your face  
I wish to sit by you  
eye to eye, my fingers touching your hair  
my lips on yours  
come close to me darling  
my soul, my life  
you're killing me!

*I have changed one word in the original song to prevent the concept of death and add life and vitality to its core, although it has a humorous connotation. I tried to be faithful to the originality of the song, but at the same time wanted to avoid the misogynistic message in order to modernize its implication.*

You could remove every feather  
from a canarybird  
but you can never ever remove  
her desire to fly!

# MARJAN VAHDAT



*I am a plant rooted in your soil...  
You are the passion of patience  
You are the color of the cloud*

Born in Tehran in 1976, Marjan Vahdat started her career in music as a child, taking piano lessons and Persian singing with different Master musicians in Iran, in the same way as her older sister, Mahsa Vahdat. Marjan plays setar and daf and she is currently studying music in Cologne, Germany.

She has performed in many international festivals and concerts, appearing in Germany, Norway, Italy, France, Sweden, Bahrain, England, Spain, the United States and Turkey. She has worked with many composers in Iran other countries. The duet performances and recordings that she and her sister, Mahsa create are well loved for the exquisite intertwining of their voices.

Marjan Vahdat works with Freemuse, an independent international organizations which advocates freedom of expression for musicians and composers worldwide ([www.freemuse.org](http://www.freemuse.org)). In 2007, she sang and recorded the signature song for Music Freedom Day.

## Rooted in You

I desire the pure sky of you  
I love to let your vine wrap my intoxication  
I love to be one with the water lily  
I am a plant rooted in your soil  
You are the passion of patience  
You are the color of the cloud  
You are the taste of tears  
You are the scent of the soil  
A moving sea, like a cloud in clean, clean air  
You are the passion of patience  
You are the color of the cloud

Dedicated to Tehran  
Lyrics from a poem by Mohammad Ebrahim Jafari

Musicians:  
**Pasha Hanjani**  
**Shervin Mohajer**  
**Gjermund Silset**  
**Kenneth Ekornes**

Produced by Mahsa Vahdat and Erik Hillestad  
Composition & Lyrics by Mahsa Vahdat,  
based on *Sholail Goosheh* and *Boosalik*  
by Hassan Kasai / Mohammad Ebrahim Jafari  
From the album *Blue Fields*  
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Photo by Elena Bennati

# PARI MALEKI



*My little tree  
was in love with wind  
homeless wind  
Where is the home of the wind?*

Pari Maleki is the leader and primary vocalist of Khonya, an Iranian group of musicians who play traditional music in a new way, incorporating folk music into the Radif, and creating new sounds. Pari is an elder to the creative young members of the group who all came together in 1994 specifically to begin creating music with women. Joined in 2000 by several male musicians, Khonya has become a groundbreaking ensemble dedicated to both tradition and exploration.

Pari was born in 1951 and trained with masters, Nasrollah Nasehpour, Mahmoud Karimi, Ali Jahandar and Amir Payver. A teacher herself for the last 26 years, she has performed in Iran, France, Germany, the UK, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium, receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 18<sup>th</sup> Fajr Music Festival.

She has performed for a UNESCO event and been the focus of several documentaries by Babak Borzuyeh and Khosrow Sinaei. Her recordings include many CD's including *Forgotten Stories*, *A Tribute to Ba'naan*, *Tehran 1960s*, *Reminiscences of Iran* and *More Beautiful than Moon and Flower*.

## Miyane Tariki (In the Darkness)

I called you from darkness  
silence, breeze  
lifting the curtain  
to a warm sky

A star burned  
A star faded  
A star died

I called you  
I called you  
My whole being  
held in my hands  
like a bowl of milk

The moon glanced blue  
on the panes  
Sad music  
rose like smoke  
from the city of crickets  
glimmering like smoke  
on the windows

Someone sighed  
hopelessly  
from my breast  
all night  
Someone arose  
Someone wanting you  
Someone thrust down again  
by two icy hands

All night sadness  
dropping from  
the black boughs  
Someone made helpless  
Someone calling you  
The air caving in on him  
like a roof

My little tree  
was in love with wind  
homeless wind  
Where is the home of the wind?  
Where is the home of the wind?

From a poem by Forugh Farrokhzad

Musicians:  
**Jalal Amirpoursaeed**  
**Behrang Baghaee**  
**Ava Ayoubi**  
**Bamdad Maleki**  
**Sina Khoshk Bijari**  
**Nima Niktab**

Produced by Khonya Music Group (Pari Maleki)  
Composition & Lyrics by Pari Maleki / Forough Farrokhzad  
Arrangement by Jalal AmirPourSaeed  
Published by Khonya Music Group (Pari Maleki)  
From the album: *Days of Yore Lovers (Aasheghane Derooz)*  
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Photo by Farhang Ahang

# FARIBA



Fariba began to seriously devote herself to music at the age of 25, and spent the next 20 years continuing intense study, even as she has become an accomplished performer and teacher herself. Educated in setar, tonbak and vocal performance, she has also worked in the integration of Iranian poetry and its particular rhythms to deepen her understanding for performance and composing.

Beginning in 2010, she released three albums, one each consecutive year, *Dashti Nasleh Khamoosh*, *Nava*, and *Segah*. Performing with Saman bouyan, she toured Japan in 2007. In 2009 she joined Hassan Zargani and Avaye Nuw touring Azerbaijan.

She is the co-writer of two books in association with Iranian Radio and Television on musical standards, applications and information for traditional Persian instruments including, tar, setar and tambour. She teaches setar and vocal work privately.

## Avaz dashti

I am very agitated from this bad life  
I do not see any trace of happiness around me  
Only spite and wailing and groaning and shouting  
All that I remember from my past life has perished

Musicians:

**Hasan Zarkani**  
**Reza Sadredini**  
**Amir Siavashpoor**  
**Behnam Javid**  
**Sohil Sun Ahmadi**  
**Mahdi Najafi**

Produced by Hasan Hadi Zarkani  
Composition & Lyrics by Hasan Hadi Zarkani / Fariba  
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# SUSSAN DEYHIM



## *The moth cannot fly from the candle*

Sussan Deyhim is an Iranian composer, vocalist and performance artist. She is internationally known for creating a unique sonic and vocal language imbued with a sense of ritual and the unknown. She was part of the national ballet company in Iran from the age of thirteen and she traveled all across Iran studying with master folk musicians and dancers. In 1976 she joined The Bejart Ballet in Europe after receiving a scholarship to attend Bejart's performance art school Mudra, where she was trained in many of the great dance, music and theater traditions of the world, as well as in classical ballet. Her music remains true to the spirit of her ancient heritage while pointing to the future with a very personal and poetic dramatic sensibility.

In 1980 she moved to New York embarking on a multifaceted career encompassing music, theatre, dance, media and film. She created/starred in groundbreaking media operas at La Mama in the '80s including *Azax/Attrax* and *The Ghost of Ibn Sabah*. Sussan's wide-ranging collaborations with artists from across the spectrum of contemporary art have included, Ornette Coleman, Bobby McFerrin, Peter Gabriel, Bill Laswell, Talvin Singh, Micky Hart, Branford Marsalis, Jerry Garcia, Doug Wimbish, Adrian Sherwood and The Blue Men Group and with visual artists, Shirin Neshat and Sophie Calle.

Her composition *Windfall/Beshno Az Ney* was recently used by U2 throughout the US and Europe. *The Candle and the Moth* is excerpted from Sussan's album *Madman of God*, created around poems by Rumi, Saadi and other Persian Sufi masters, set to a mixture of traditional Persian music and delicate electronics.

Sussan's other solo recordings include: *Shy Angels* with Bill Laswell, *Majoun*, *Desert Equations* with Richard Horowitz and *City of Leaves*, released on her label Venus Rising Records.

Produced by Sussan Deyhim  
Composition & Lyrics by Sussan Deyhim (after a poem by Saadi)  
Published by Les Editions de la Bascule / Strictly Confidential  
From the album *Madman of God*  
ISRC: BE6F50001530  
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## **The Candle and the Moth**

Reason is like a moth  
and the Beloved is like a candle

Whenever the moth dashes itself against the candle  
it is consumed and destroyed,  
but the moth is this way by nature

No matter how much that consuming flame and agony may hurt  
the moth cannot fly from the candle

If there were another creature like the moth  
that could fly away from the light of the candle  
and dashed itself against that light  
that would not be a mere comparison,  
that would be a moth itself

But if the moth  
dashed itself against the light of the candle  
and the moth were not consumed,  
that indeed could not be a candle

Therefore,  
the human being who can do without God,  
lacking even the desire,  
that is no human being at all

But if they are able to comprehend God  
that indeed could not be God  
So, the true lover is never free from striving  
They revolve restlessly and ceaselessly around  
the light of God

And God consumes them  
Making them nothing,  
Destroying the veil of their reason

From a poem by Saadi

Produced by Deeyah

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I wish to express my deepest gratitude and respect to the awe-inspiring artists who have participated in this CD – and to the many other wonderful female artists conveying the stories and songs of their Iranian foremothers, and the history of their people.

– Deeyah

1	<b>Mahsa Vahdat</b>	<i>Sorrowful spring</i>	06:06
2	<b>Mamak Khadem</b>	<i>Bigharar (Restless Yearning)</i>	03:11
3	<b>Yasna</b>	<i>Atash e Tabnak (Bright Fire)</i>	06:00
4	<b>Parissa</b>	<i>Mathnavi</i>	08:26
5	<b>Sepideh Raissadat</b>	<i>Na're-ye Showgh</i>	03:22
6	<b>Naghmeh Gholami</b>	<i>Ballad of Cypress</i>	03:55
7	<b>Azam Ali (Niyaz)</b>	<i>The Hunt</i>	04:31
8	<b>Raha</b>	<i>Moment (Hengaam)</i>	07:04
9	<b>Pari Isazadeh</b>	<i>Dokhtar Maret Mana (Girl! May Your Mother Live Long)</i>	06:01
10	<b>Marjan Vahdat</b>	<i>Rooted in You</i>	05:23
11	<b>Pari Maleki</b>	<i>Miyane Tariki (In the Darkness)</i>	06:58
12	<b>Fariba</b>	<i>Avaz dashti</i>	06:52
13	<b>Sussan Deyhim</b>	<i>The Candle and the Moth</i>	05:09

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