

2022 Nowruz Festival of Women Poets
March 26, 2022
Artists' Biographies

Padideh Ahrarnejad is an award-winning tar player, arranger, composer, and educator who has brought Persian music across Europe, the Middle East, North America and Asia. A graduate of the Tehran Art Music School and the Art University of Tehran, she studied tar with leading figures of Persian music. She was a member of the Iran National Music Orchestra and the Radio and Television Orchestra; performed with the Simorq Orchestra, an all-star group dedicated to acquainting the public with Iranian culture; and was a featured soloist on legendary Iranian composer Hossein Alizadeh's album, "Young Artists" (Honarmandan-i Javan). Since emigrating to Toronto in 2016, Padideh has been a member of Kuné, "Canada's Global Orchestra," a group of elite players from different musical traditions organized by the Royal Conservatory of Music.

Golrokh Aminian (Khodabandehlou) is a trained soprano who started her music education as a child by learning to play the violin. She studied vocal techniques in Iran and was a member of the choir. Later on, Golrokh took on the position as a lead soprano in the Roudaki Hall of Tehran before moving to Canada and continuing her vocal training in Toronto at the Royal Conservatory of Music. In 2015, she co-founded, together with Amir Rahbar, "Cultural Interchange - 360," a not-for-profit organization aiming to create a cross-cultural bridge between people of different cultures through music and other performing arts.

Naghme Faraahmand is a Persian percussionist. She is also skillful in playing Darbuka (Doubak), Dayereh, Cajon, Udu, and Drumset. In 2010, Faraahmand moved to Canada and started working with various genres of music, including the music of Arabian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Indian origins, and Jazz. Here she released her first CD, "Unbound," followed by CDs "A Tale of Two Cities" and "Refuge." Active on the Toronto scene, she has appeared with the Tafelmusik Orchestra, the Toronto Consort, the Amici Ensemble, and David Buchbinder's production of "The Roots of Andalusia." Alongside teaching at various international establishments and masterclasses, Faraahmand has published a book, *Helheleh*.

With a B.A. from the University of Herat, **Farzana Hosseini** began writing poetry during her teenage years. A resident of Toronto since 2015, a selection of her social, mystical and folkloric poetry is scheduled for publication in 2022.

With a Ph.D. from the University of Isfahan, **Leila Kordbacheh** is an Iranian poet, literary critic and scholar. With specialization in modern and contemporary poetry, she has published multiple collections of poems and critical and analytical works on the history of literature.

Born in Tehran, **Granaz Moussavi** published her first poems when she was almost 16 years old. Since then, she has continued writing and publishing poetry in various magazines and anthologies in Iran and other countries. Her first poetry collection, *Sketching on the Night*, was published underground in Tehran in 1996. Her second book, *Barefoot Till Morning*, won the 2021 Karnameh Best Poetry Book of the Year Award. Granaz published her third collection, *The Songs of the Forbidden Woman*, in 2003. In 2005, her *The survivors of Patience* was published in France/Saint Nazaire. Her poetry is translated and published in nine languages (French, German, Italian, English, Kurdish, Swedish, Chinese, Turkish, and Portuguese). In addition, she has presented her poetry in various poetry festivals, seminars, and symposiums. With a Ph.D. in Film Studies and Filmmaking at the University of Western Sydney, she has made several short films and documentaries. Her debut feature film, *My Tehran For Sale*, won an

Australian IF award for best independent film and was internationally premiered at the Toronto Film Festival. Her second feature film, *When Pomegranates Howl*, was shot in Kabul and post-produced in South Australia. This film was Australia's foreign-language entry to the Oscars and a candidate for best youth film in Asia Pacific Film Festival 2022. In addition, it was premiered at Tokyo International Film Festival, followed by numerous prestigious festivals throughout the world to date.

With a 2009 M.A. from Tehran's Art College, **Noushin Pasdar** ranked first in the Youth Section of Fajr Festival in 1997 and 1999. She was also recipient 2013 Festival of Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar award. In addition to performing in online concerts of the Roudaki Foundation, she served as the director of the Nkisa Ensemble during the 2021 Fajr Music Festival.

Born in Tehran in 1952, **Amir Rahbar** was introduced to music in early childhood by playing the Accordion and Tombak (Iranian percussion). He has been living in Toronto-Canada since 1997 and has worked with different Iranian and international musicians, composing, arranging and performing music. He is the co-founder of the not-for-profit "Cultural Interchange-360", with many performances in their portfolio.

Sholeh Wolpé is an Iranian-born poet, playwright and literary translator. Her performances, solo or in collaboration with musicians and artists, have been hailed by audiences as mesmerizing. She is the author or editor of more than a dozen books, several plays, and an oratorio. Her most recent book, *Abacus of Loss: A Memoir in Verse* (University of Arkansas Press, March 2022) is lauded by National Book Award finalist Ilya Kaminsky as a book "that created its own genre—a thrill of lyric combined with the narrative spell." Sholeh is the recipient of a 2014 PEN Heim, 2013 Midwest Book Award, and 2010 Lois Roth Persian Translation prize as well as artist fellowships and residencies in the U.S., Mexico, Spain, Australia and Switzerland. She has lived in Iran, Trinidad, and the United Kingdom and is currently a writer-in-residence at the University of California, Irvine. She lives in Los Angeles and Barcelona.