

# Royal Festival Hall-London

## March 2010

Ramin Zolfonoun, March 2010 concert in the memory of his uncle one of the greatest Iranian musicians who plays for the first time with fluid piano.

Organized by: Geoff Smith

Sponsored by: Lady Kharrazi

Tonight is my honour and privilege to introduce Lady Jamil Kharrazi, the founder, director of the Toos Foundation. Thanks for her and the Toos Foundation's support, it has been possible for us to bring Ramin Zolfonoun all the way from California to play Persian music on the fluid piano for us tonight.

Lady Jamil Kharrazi has been a lifelong supporter of the Arts and Education, and especially of Iranian Arts and Culture, through the work of the Toos Foundation and events which the Foundation has sponsored and organized. These include the following programmes:

One hundred years of popular music in Iran

A history of 3000 years of dance in Iran

Immortal Flowers of Persian song and music

And most recently:

The history of classical music, opera and ballet in Iran

She and the Toos Foundation have been successful in highlighting and documenting for posterity some of the most valuable contributions of Persian Art and Culture to the world culture.

We are very grateful for her generous support of tonight's programme for which I offer her my heartfelt thanks. I would like to call Lady Kharrazi to the stage to share few words, with us.

Jamil's speech:

Ladies and gentlemen good evening

Mr Smith

In the same way that woes, grief and natural disasters unconsciously succeed in uniting people from different areas of the world in mutual sympathy and compassion for each other's misfortune despite their outward differences and variety of social affiliation, likewise for centuries art and literature has served a similar purpose in exposing the unity and fraternity on the aesthetic level between all peoples beyond all their outward difference of culture, race, creed and colour.

Mr Smith translates:

"In this spirit, the Toos Foundation has been established in order to introduce the different varieties of literature, art and sciences of Persia to the general non-Persian speaking public, and to convey to the world the message that so long as love and art have some conceptual and intellectual human value in the world, human beings will tend to ignore the boundaries and differences that exist between them, since hearts focused on such human values held conceptually in common between them tend to be naturally brought closer to each other."

"In all the events that the Toos Foundation has organized and sponsored to date we have always tried to expose some facet or other of the arts of Persia which have been lost or are in danger of being lost, and take them off the dusty shelves of libraries in order to reveal their living colour and life, and thus convey the actual vitality and existential fragrance of their world of art and music. The idea was to reiterate to the world the truth that Iran has far more

to offer the world than recent painful events of terrorism, bloodletting, war and aggression which one hears about constantly in the media today, and that from ancient times Persia was a land which protected the liberty of other nations and religions, and therefore one should not mistake and conflate the decisions and will of the government that is today in power today for the real will of the Iranian people. For art and artists there is no border. The hearts of all lovers of art the world over beat with the same breath.”

“The Toos Foundation thus represents an attempt to construct a bridge between the East and the West through the shared medium of Art and Culture, so as to bring these antipodes closer together, to uncover and expose the similarities and correspondences shared between them as part of their mutual humanity, since this is the supreme intellectual ideal that is held in common between them.”

“Ramin Zolfonoun is a famous pianist who comes from a celebrated family of great musicians. His father is the great Mahmud Zolfonoun, the virtuoso violinist and composer, who studied under the likes of artists such as Ruhullah Khaliqi and Abdol Hasan Saba, who were among the supremely talented musicians of their day.

“His uncle is Jalal Zolfonoun, one of the supreme masters of the Tar in Iran. Ramin Zolfonoun is himself influenced and inspired in his playing by the work of Murteza Mahjubi, who was between the years 1965 and 1990, Iran’s greatest pianist who performed many priceless concerts at venues worldwide. We are happy that the Toos Foundation has been able to bring him such a distance so as to have him with us this evening under one roof, and to play Persian music for us on this wonderful new invention. The Fluid Piano may the day bring us all nothing but further successes such as this.

---