

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Locals Join Pacific Symphony To Celebrate Iranian New Year, Nowruz

The Pacific Symphony offered a festive sold-out concert Sunday at Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall to celebrate the Iranian New Year holiday of Nowruz, marking the arrival of spring.

Presented in collaboration with the Farhang Foundation, the concert led by Music Director Carl St. Clair featured works of Dvorák, contemporary Persian symphonic music, as well as traditional Persian music featuring guest artists Iranian conductor, pianist and composer Shardad Rohani, internationally renowned vocalist Hamayoun Shajarian and instrumentalist Sohrab Pournazeri.

A special reception took place post-concert for a select group of symphony board members, Farhang Foundation board members, and members of Pacific Symphony's newly formed Cyrus Society.

Cyrus Society members are generously supportive of Pacific Symphony's efforts to build long-term partnerships with the growing number of Iranian and Iranian-American leaders and residents.

Reception guests enjoyed food and beverages including Persian delicacies, and wine, featuring Signature Shiraz supplied by Beverly Hills residents' Darioush and Shapar Khaledi's Darioush Estate in the Southern Napa Valley.

Anoosheh Oskouian (CEO of Ship & Shore Environmental, Inc.), who serves as a trustee of the Farhang Foundation and a Pacific Symphony board member



SYMPHONY SUPPORTERS— From left, Beverly Hills residents Darioush and Shapar Khaledi. The Persian-inspired wine at the reception following the Pacific Symphony's Nowruz concert was supplied by their Darioush Estate in the Southern Napa Valley. **Photo by Ann Chaitillon**

said, "I am so pleased that the Farhang Foundation has partnered with Pacific Symphony to celebrate Nowruz." She continued, "It has been my dream to bring this special Nowruz concert onstage to connect East and West musically."

Established in 2008, Farhang Foundation is a non-religious, non-political and nonprofit foundation with a mission to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture.

'Mo's Show' Of Ornest's Art Returns This Weekend

"Mo's Show," a free second exhibit and sale of paintings by the late Maury Ornest, returns this weekend, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, March 30-31 at 524 N. Elm Dr., Beverly Hills.

After his death of heart disease at 58, Ornest's family discovered secret storage units with about 1,000 canvases that he had created over the 20-plus years the suffered from paranoia and

break from reality, struggles he revealed in his journal entries.

All proceeds from sales will benefit charities including Beyond Differences, Craft & Folk Art Museum, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, InsightLA, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, Kehillat Israel, The Friends of the Semel Institute at UCLA, and Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services.

Los Angeles Jewish Symphony To Celebrate 25th Anniversary With Gala

The Los Angeles Jewish Symphony (LAJS) is turning 25 and celebrating.

"It's been an amazing journey of discovery and I'm so excited," says Noreen Green, founding artistic director and conductor.

The orchestra will mark the milestone with a "Gala and Concert," featuring special guests and highlights from the group's signature repertoire, at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, April 7 at American Jewish University, 15600 Mulholland Dr., L.A.

The origins of the symphony go back to Green's days studying at the Aspen Music Festival's Conducting Academy.

She put on a program of Jewish music, and Murry Sidlin, resident artist, teacher and associate director of conducting studies, was impressed.

"He told me he was Jewish as well," recalls Green. "And that I should start a Jewish Symphony in Los Angeles. 'It's your niche,' he said."

While her studies had been in choral music, the newlywed Green discussed the idea with her husband and decided "It would be a wonderful thing to do and a mitzvah for the Jewish community."

With underwriting from her husband's business partner and grants, the orchestra debuted on April 10, 1994 and has grown into an acclaimed ensemble that has played the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Ford Theatres, UCLA's Royce Hall, The Soraya and numerous other venues.

The mission, Green says, is to highlight music of the Jewish experience. This means not only playing music of Jewish composers, but pieces like Sergei Prokofiev's *Overture on Hebrew Themes* and Dmitri Shostakovich's *From Jewish Folk Poetry*.

Emceed by TV host Brad Pomerance, the gala will honor and feature the symphony's Founding Concertmaster Mark Kashper, also part of the LA Phil.

Green first met Kashper when he helped her with her doctorate at USC on the music of Russian/Ukrainian Jewish composer David Nowakowsky.

"We really clicked musically," says Green, "and his musical excellence has driven the level of musicianship and the repertoire."

For the gala, Kashper will perform two solos, Leon Stein's *Aria Hebraique* and Julius Berger's *Zigeunerlied*.

Tovah Feldshuh, four-time Tony nominee, currently featured on *Star Wars*



Dr. Noreen Green

Resistance and a longtime friend of the symphony will also bring some surprises, Green says. Known as Rachel Bloom's singing mother on *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, she has a Gershwin medley planned.

Soprano Hila Plitmann will sing Miriam's aria from Andrea Clearfield's *Women of Valor*, a cantata commissioned by the LAJS.

"It's about Miriam as she dances as she crosses the Red Sea," says Green. "Miriam was the first woman conductor and I relate to her."

Emily Bear, 17-year-old pianist-composer, will perform her *And Forever Free*, celebrating the spirit of Abraham Lincoln. The piece was last year's recipient Illinois' Order of Lincoln Award.

Funds raised will help support the symphony's education program. The four-week curriculum each year uses Sephardic music "as a building bridge between Jewish and Latino communities which have similar culture and music," says Green.

The program serves 1,200 L.A.-area students yearly, "many of whom have never seen or touched an instrument," says Green.

Gala tickets start at \$500 and include an appetizer buffet and dessert reception.

To purchase and for more information, call 818-646-2844 or visit <https://www.lajewishsymphony.com>.

—Steve Simmons

Danny Elfman's *Eleven Eleven* New Violin Concerto To Debut at The Soraya

Danny Elfman's new violin concerto, *Eleven Eleven*, will be performed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by its music director Thomas Søndergård at 8 p.m., Thursday, April 4 at The Soraya, 18111 Nordhoff St. at Cal State Northridge.

Elfman is known for his film work over three decades. Beginning with his first score of Tim Burton's *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, he has since scored more than 100 films. His most recent work is for the Tim Burton's *Dumbo* for Disney, and *The Grinch* for Universal.

Eleven Eleven started when Elfman was in Prague for a symphonic concert of the music he composed for Tim



Danny Elfman

Burton's films. Sandy Cameron was the soloist for the cadenza from *Edward Scissorhands*. It was then suggested to Elfman that he write a concerto for Cameron.

Elfman then went on an exhaustive study listening to composers including Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, whose violin concerto is a touchstone.

Tickets, starting at \$49 are available by calling 818-677-3000 or online at TheSoraya.org

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