



Feathers of Fire: An Ancient Persian Epic Brought to Life With Shadow Puppets
With Award Winning Iranian Artist Hamid Rahmanian
in collaboration with Larry Reed and ShadowLight productions
Four Performances at the Fitzgerald Theatre (Cambridge, MA)
April 16-17, 2016 (3pm & 7 pm each day)

Sponsored by The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University

Purchase tickets online at: boxoffice.harvard.edu

for press ticket please contact Melissa Hibbard @
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"One of the great epics of all time and my favorite Shahnameh brought to life in a spectacular fashion by Hamid Rahmanian with shadow puppets design and cinematic wizardry." — Francis Ford Coppola

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Cambridge, Massachusetts (April 16th-17th, 2016) — Visual artist and 2014 Guggenheim Fellow **Hamid Rahmanian** is thrilled to partner with **ShadowLight Productions** to present the largest shadow puppet play ever to be performed — **FEATHERS OF FIRE**, a breathtaking, cinemascope-sized shadow play based on the 10th century classic Persian epic, Shahnameh (The Book of Kings).

FEATHERS OF FIRE tells the action-packed tale of Zaul and Rudabeh, two star-crossed lovers of old Persia. Zaul is raised by a mythical bird in the wild. His deep love for Rudabeh enables them both to triumph over inconceivable odds, and then give birth to a beloved son, Rostam — the most important mythological hero of Shahnameh.

This family-friendly show is sure to entertain and thrill both children and adults alike. The artistic style and visually stunning imagery created by Rahmanian encompasses over 500 years of the visual arts from cultures ranging from India to the Mediterranean Sea (c. 14th-19th centuries). “*Feathers of Fire* has elements from the *Jungle Book*, from *Rapunzel* and *Romeo and Juliet*,” says Hamid Rahmanian. “But it precedes all these stories. Zaul’s story is over 1,000 years old — that’s what makes it so universal.”

Based on Rahmanian’s best selling illustrated book, *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings* (2013), **FEATHERS OF FIRE** utilizes Larry Reed’s hallmark shadow casting methods, incorporating over 150 shadow puppets and performers in elaborate, handmade masks and costumes. Over 100 digitally animated backgrounds lend an authentic texture to the performance and introduce a new visual tradition to the audience, by creating a feeling of live animation — all seamlessly choreographed and projected on a 15’ x 30’ screen. The original score is by Iranian composers **Loga Ramin Torkian** and **Azam Ail** of the band **Niyaz** who enhance the cinematic experience with a modern twist.

“When I immigrated to the U.S. I realized that many people knew nothing about Iran’s rich history in the arts and literature,” says Rahmanian. “I want to be a cultural activist, a cultural ambassador by showing the contribution that Persian culture has brought to civilization. There is great power in a live performance. I hope that *Feathers of Fire* presents a more holistic view of Iran. Moving past politics and religion, it shows Iran and its culture in the universal context of a shared and common world mythology.”

FEATHERS OF FIRE will perform at the **Fitzgerald Theatre**, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138): April 16th and 17th at 7 p.m.; April 16th & 17th at 3 p.m.; Cost: \$30 for adults, \$25 for students, \$15 for children 12 and under.

Tickets can be purchased online at: [**BOXOFFICE.HARVARD.EDU**](http://BOXOFFICE.HARVARD.EDU)

VIDEO TRAILER FOR THE PRODUCTION and Additional Information :
[**http://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/event/feathers-fire-persian-epic**](http://cmes.fas.harvard.edu/event/feathers-fire-persian-epic)

For more information about **FEATHERS OF FIRE**, visit: www.kingorama.com.

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Key Artists:

Hamid Rahmanian (Creator, Designer, and Director) a 2014 Guggenheim Fellow, is an award-winning visual artist/filmmaker born and educated in Tehran, Iran. His work centers on film and graphic arts. His narrative and documentary films have premiered at Venice, Sundance, Toronto, Tribeca and IDFA Film Festivals. He has won numerous international awards and his works have

been televised on international networks including PBS, Sundance Channel, IFC, Channel 4, BBC, and Al Jazeera. Rahmanian undertook the immense task of illustrating and commissioning a new translation and adaptation of *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi, entitled, *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings* (2013, Quantuck Lane Press). Rahmanian has created a pop-up book based on his *Shahnameh*, which is due out in the fall of 2016.

Larry Reed (Shadow Master) is an internationally recognized theatre director and is one of the few American dalangs (“shadow master”) of traditional Balinese *Wayang Kulit*. The Founder/Artistic Director of ShadowLight Productions, Reed has pioneered contemporary shadow theater by integrating traditional shadow theatre techniques with film, modern theatre and dance styles. Truly a multidisciplinary artist, Reed has also written, directed and produced films in the US and Mexico. *Shadow Master* (1979) has been shown on the PBS and Discovery Channels. Reed has garnered numerous awards and honors, and was named one of Top 50 Artists in the SF Bay Area by Metropolitan Magazine in 1995 and 1996.

Loga Ramin Torkian (composer) is an Iranian-born multi-instrumentalist and composer. He is recognized internationally for his ground-breaking work with World Music groups Niyaz and Axiom Of Choice, both of which he co-founded. A highly-gifted composer and a visionary, Loga is greatly respected for his ability to adapt the Persian classical repertoire to his own unique and modern compositions. In 2014 Loga was nominated for a Canadian JUNO Award in the Category of “Best World Music Album” for the album he recorded with musical partner Azam Ali titled, “Lamentation of Swans.” He continues to produce albums and tour worldwide with NIYAZ.

Azam Ali (composer) is one of the most prolific, versatile, and gifted singers/ composers on the international music stage today. Azam’s most notable work is with the cutting-edge world music electro-acoustic project Niyaz. Her distinctive voice can be heard on myriad film and television scores including “Thor - The Dark World”, "Matrix-Revolutions", “Prince of Persia - The Sands of Time”, “The Fight Club,” “True Blood”, "Alias", "The Agency," and "Prison Break." Azam has also collaborated with numerous musicians such as Serj Tankian of System of a Down, Peter Murphy of Bauhaus, Dredg, Chris Vrenna formerly of Nine Inch Nails, Kodo, Zakir Hussain, and Mickey Hart.

ShadowLight Productions was founded in San Francisco in 1972 by Larry Reed to nurture indigenous shadow theatre traditions, expand the possibilities of the shadow theatre medium, and reflect the cultural diversity and complexity of the modern world through its works. It is one of the very few companies dedicated solely to the art of shadow theatre, and fills a distinctively unique role in the American Theatre scene. The company’s work has been presented internationally and the company has received Citations for Excellence from the International Puppetry Association, as well as having been nominated for the American Theater Wing Design Award.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University was established in 1954 to support research and teaching on the Middle East, and has produced generations of scholars with a profound understanding of and active engagement in the region. At the core of the Center’s mandate is the pursuit of firsthand knowledge about the Middle East based on literacy in its languages and a deep understanding of its diverse politics, cultures, and histories, arts, and literatures. CMES is committed to the broad dissemination of Middle East studies research and expertise to the wider public.

FEATHERS OF FIRE is produced by Fictionville Studio and Banu Productions, in association with ShadowLight Productions, and sponsored by Two Chairs, Inc and Canon USA. Head of Pro-

duction at Fictionville Studio: Melissa Hibbard. Producers: Hamid Rahmanian, Melissa Hibbard and Nasim Yazdani. Co-Producer: Ahmad Kiarostami.