

Asia Society  
Presents

# Kayhan Kalhor with Ali Bahrami Fard

*“I Will Not Stand Alone”*



**Saturday, November 16th, 8:00 P.M.**

**Asia Society**  
**725 Park Avenue at 70<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**New York City**

Preceded by a Pre-Performance Lecture by  
Professor Stephen Blum of CUNY Graduate  
Center College at 7:00 PM



**Asia**  
Society®

## **Kayhan Kalhor with Ali Bahrami Fard** **“I Will Not Stand Alone”**

During the early period of unrest in my country, I felt very isolated. This was one of the most difficult stages in my life, where darkness and violence seemed to be taking over. Closing in allowed me the time to rethink music: not technically, as my work has followed a certain path, but this period allowed me to see the importance of music and how it can open doors of hope. It took me a while to understand this, and the events I witnessed crystallized many things for me. I chose to be with the people and play music for them, feeling more connected than ever before.

This album is the product of that dark period. The process of making this music and letting it be heard allowed me to realize that I will not stand alone.

—Kayhan Kalhor

### **About the Artists**

**Kayhan Kalhor (Shah Kaman)** a three-time GRAMMY nominee, is an internationally acclaimed virtuoso on the kamancheh, who through his many musical collaborations has been instrumental in popularizing Persian music in the West and is a creative force in today's music scene. His performances of traditional Persian music and multiple collaborations have attracted audiences around the globe. He has studied the music of Iran's many regions, in particular those of Khorason and Kordestan, and has toured the world as a soloist with various ensembles and orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and the Orchestre National de Lyon. He is co-founder of the renowned ensembles Dastan, Ghazal: Persian & Indian Improvisations and Masters of Persian Music. Kayhan Kalhor has composed works for Iran's most renowned vocalists Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Shahram Nazeri and has also performed and recorded with Iran's greatest instrumentalists. He has composed music for television and film and was most recently featured on the soundtrack of Francis Ford Coppola's *Youth Without Youth* in a score that he collaborated on with Osvaldo Golijov. In 2004, Kayhan was invited by American composer John Adams to give a solo recital at Carnegie Hall as part of his Perspectives Series and in the same year he appeared on a double bill at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, sharing the program with the Festival Orchestra performing the Mozart Requiem. Kayhan is a member of Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project and his compositions appear on all three of the Ensemble's albums.

**Ali Bahrami Fard (Bass Santour)** born in Shiraz, studied santour with Mrs. Arfa Atra'i and the legendary master Ostad Faramarz Payvar. With his impeccable technique and exquisite sound quality, Ali is one of his generation's most gifted and masterful santour players. He is a co-founder of the ensemble 'Santour Navazan,' and he has toured with the Kayhan Kalhor Ensemble, Baran Ensemble, Iran Zamin Ensemble, the chamber music ensemble of the Iranian Conservatory of Music, and as a soloist with the Strad Kiev Symphonic Orchestra. He has composed music for theater, film, and television including the music for the prize winning theater piece 'Among the Clouds' in Brussels. He has written books and essays on Iranian music, including 'Feragh,' a collection of compositions written for two santours, and 'Goshayesh,' for a plucked and hammered string ensemble. He teaches santour, music theory and composition at Shiraz University.

## Creating the Shah Kaman

by Peter Biffin

The Shah Kaman has a lineage stemming from two different sources. Its physical form owes much to the traditional *kamanchehs* of Persia and Azerbaijan, but the way it makes its sound comes from the *tarhu* (a new form of spike fiddle that I created in 1995).

I first came across the *kamancheh* in miniature paintings from the Middle East and Central Asia, and there was an elegance in its form that I found extremely attractive. The first bowed instrument I made was a *kamancheh* with an almost traditional design, except that it had sympathetic strings in a channel down the middle of the neck.

From 1980 onwards I experimented with the *kamancheh* and various other forms of spike fiddle from the East, especially the Turkish *tanbur* and the Chinese *erhu*. These instruments all used a skin top, and I was drawn to the type of sound that came from such a light-weight sounding board. There were other aspects of skin tops that I didn't like – because of its flexibility, skin is not good at producing low notes. By 1994 I gave up trying to get the sound I wanted from a skin top, and changed to using a wooden cone instead – this weighed the same as a skin top, but was much more rigid. Using this concept I created the new instrument that I called *tarhu*, combining the words *tanbur* and *erhu*.

In 1995 I heard a recording of the great Azerbaijani *kamancheh* player Habil Aliyev, which proved to be very significant for me. I listened to this recording hundreds of times over the next few years and finally in 2001 I made a *kamancheh* version of the *tarhu*. The overall design drew heavily on traditional *kamancheh* but inside it was pure *tarhu*, with a light-weight wooden cone suspended within the body.

In 2002, I met Kayhan Kalhor when he and I were both performing at the *Knee Fiddle Magic* festival in Rudolstadt, Germany. Kayhan liked the sound of the *tarhu*, but wanted to explore an instrument with sympathetic strings. I had already done extensive work in this field, so we decided to work together on developing a *kamancheh tarhu* with five playing strings and seven sympathetic strings.

The first version was sent to Kayhan in 2003 – some aspects of this instrument were good, but the sound needed further development. An opportunity to do this came up in 2004 when, with the help of Ross Daly, I was able to spend 3 weeks on Crete working with Habil Aliyev on the sound of the *kamancheh tarhu*. This was a wonderfully creative period, and there was a huge leap forward.

Kayhan and I collaborated further over the next few years as I continued to develop the new form of *kamancheh tarhu* for him, which he eventually received in 2008. When Kayhan suggested that this form of instrument should be called *Shah Kaman*, it seemed to me that after a long journey we had reached a significant milestone.

## **Bass Santour**

The *santour* is a wooden, hammered dulcimer with seventy-two strings arranged on adjustable tuning pegs in eighteen quadruple sets. The instrument is played using lightweight wooden plectrums or *mezrab*, which are often covered by a piece of felt or cotton to soften the sound. A percussive instrument, its strings are tapped using wrist movements, with the dynamics controlled by the stroke. The *santour* is tuned diatonically according to the desired mode.

In this concert, Ali Bahrami Fard performs on a bass *santour*, a modern interpretation of the traditional instrument with ninety-six strings and twenty-four bridges, twelve on each side, with four strings falling on each bridge and tuned to the same note. It is also larger and sounds an octave lower than a regular *santour*.

## **Pre-Performance Lecture**

**Stephen Blum (Lecturer)** joined the CUNY Graduate Center faculty in 1987, when its concentration in ethnomusicology was initiated. He has published several articles, books, and encyclopedia articles on general topics (composition, improvisation, music analysis, modern music history, cultural exchange) and on specific musical practices of Iran, Kurdistan, Central Asia, Europe, and North America. He has been active in the Society for Ethnomusicology and currently serves on the editorial boards of the *British Journal for Ethnomusicology* and the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*.

## **Iran Modern**

Asia Society Museum has organized the groundbreaking exhibition, *Iran Modern*, on view from September 6, 2013 to January 5, 2014. The first major international loan exhibition on the subject, *Iran Modern* showcases paintings, sculpture, photography, and works on paper in the three decades leading up to the Revolution in 1979. A full season of programs will accompany the exhibition.

### **Selected Related Programs**

Film Series:

Iran 1960s-1970s

Kamran Shirdel—Social Documentaries

Wednesday, November 20, 6:30 PM

Film Series:

Iran 1960s-1970s

The Traveler

Abbas Kiarostami, 1974, Iran, 74 min.

Friday, November 22, 6:30 PM

Discussion:

Shattering Stereotypes of Iran and Iranians through Fiction

Wednesday, December 4, 6:30 PM

Performance:

Sound: The Encounter, New Music from Iran and Syria

Co-presented with the Aga Khan Music Initiative

Saturday, December 7, 8:00 PM

## About Performing Arts at Asia Society

The Asia Society Performing Arts program has been a pioneer in the presentation of traditional and contemporary Asian performing arts in the United States since 1957. It has introduced American audiences to the work of performing artists ranging from some of the greatest figures of traditional music such as sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar, to seminal contemporary dance companies like Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, and American artists influenced by Asian cultures such as Philip Glass. The Society has commissioned new works such as *Empty Traditions/City of Peonies* with choreographer Yin Mei, *Wenji: Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute*, a bilingual (Chinese-English) chamber opera by Macau-born composer Bun-Ching Lam, *In What Language? A Song Cycle of Lives in Transit*, composer Vijay Iyer, *Kinsmen* with Rudresh Mahanthappa and Chen Shi-Zheng's *Forgiveness*. Current major projects include *Creative Voices of Muslim Asia*, and an exciting season of performing artists from China, Japan, Cambodia and Myanmar. For more information, please visit [asiasociety.org](http://asiasociety.org)

## Asia Society Staff

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Executive Management for Kayhan Kalhor and Ali Bahrami Fard

Opus 3 Artists

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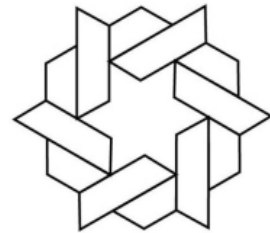
Special thank you to Mary Pat Buerkle.

This program is part of the Asia Society's ongoing initiative, *Creative Voices of Muslim Asia*, made possible by the support of the Doris Duke Foundation For Islamic Art. Additional support provided by the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, WLS Spencer Foundation and the American Institute of Iranian Studies.

This program is presented in conjunction with the exhibition, *Iran Modern*, on view September 6, 2013 through January 5, 2014



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