



A cinematic shadow play for all ages

# Feathers of Fire



**An Epic Adventure**  
from the Persian Book of Kings, Shahnameh



Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 7:30 pm



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# FEATHERS OF FIRE: A Persian Epic

A production of  
**FICTIONVILLE STUDIO** and **BANU PRODUCTIONS**

Conceived, designed, and directed by  
**HAMID RAHMANIAN**

In collaboration with  
**LARRY REED** and **SHADOWLIGHT PRODUCTIONS**

Original music by  
**LOGA RAMIN TORKIAN** and **AZAM ALI**

Written and adapted by  
**HAMID RAHMANIAN**

Co-written by  
**VIKAS MENON**

Based on the book, *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings*

Storyboards and concept development by  
**SYD FINI**

Puppets handcrafted by  
**NEDA KAZEMIFAR** and **SPICA WOBBE**

Assistant director  
**FRED C. RILEY III**

Digital media directed and orchestrated by  
**MOHAMMAD TALANI**

Costumes made by  
**DINA ZARIF**

Performed by  
**YA WEN CHIEN   GABRIELA GARCIA**  
**ARIEL LAURYN   ROSE NISKER   LEAH OGAWA**  
**FRED C. RILEY III   DINA ZARIF**

Producers  
**HAMID RAHMANIAN   MELISSA HIBBARD   NASIM YAZDANI**

Co-Producer  
**AHMAD KIAROSTAMI**

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# CAST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

## NARRATOR

Performance by Fred C. Riley III; voice by Charlie Varon

## SAUM, *A Knight in the Persian Court*

Performance and voice by Fred C. Riley III

## SIMORGH, *A Magical Bird*

Performance and voice by Rose Nisker

## ZAUL, *Son of Saum, the Hero of the Story*

Performance by Gabriela Garcia; voice by Ryan Tasker

## KING MANUCHEHR, *The King of Persia*

Voice by Marc Thompson

## MEHRAB, *The Governor of Kabul*

Performance by Ariel Lauryan; voice by Marc Thompson

## SINDOKH, *Wife of Mehrab*

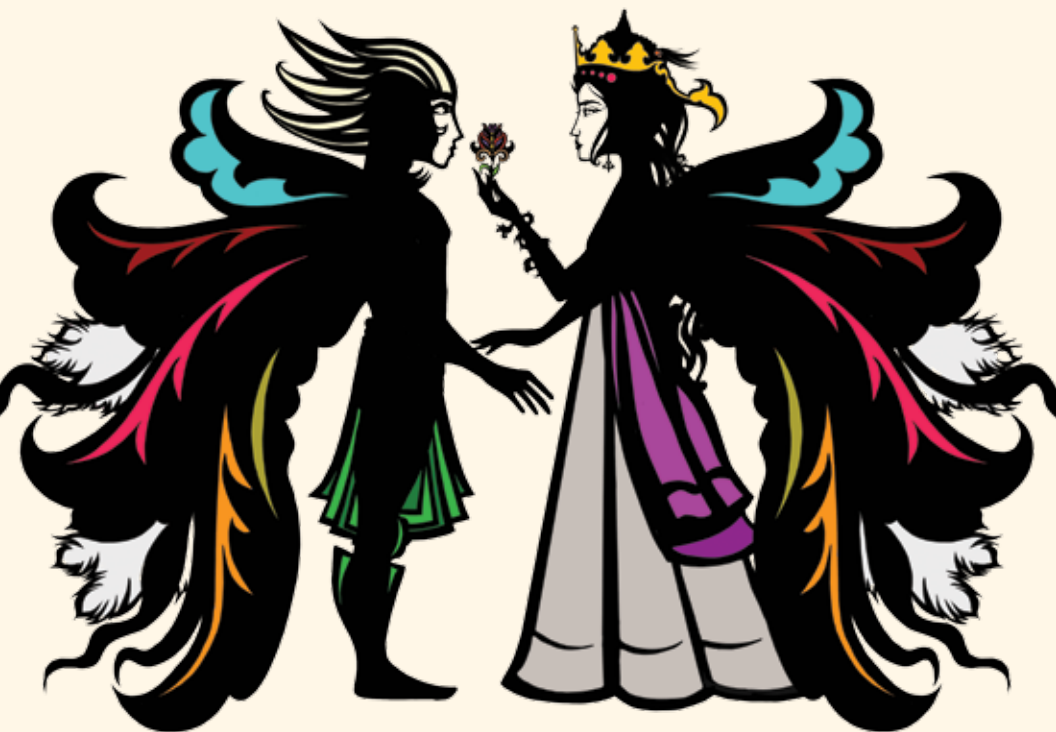
Performance by Rose Nisker; voice by Jeri Lynn Cohen

## RUDABEH, *Daughter of Mehrab & Sindokht*

Performance by Dina Zarif; voice by Lisa Hori-Garcia

## MUSICIANS

Loga Ramin Torkian, Azam Ali, Sinan Cem Eroglu, Habib Meftah Boushehri, Omer Avci, and Dina Zarif



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# ABOUT THE 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), which is now in its second edition and available as an audiobook. Rahmanian has created a pop-up book based on his *Shahnameh*, which is due out in 2018.

**LARRY REED** (Shadow Master) is an internationally recognized theater director and is one of the few American dalangs (“shadow masters”) of traditional Balinese shadow theater known as Wayang Kulit. The founder and artistic director of ShadowLight Productions, Reed has pioneered contemporary shadow theater by integrating traditional shadow theater techniques with film, modern theater, and dance styles. A true 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 the Discovery Channel. 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 groundbreaking 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*, *The Matrix Revolutions*, *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, *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.

**YA WEN (WINNIE) CHIEN** (Ensemble) was born in Taiwan and currently lives and works in San Francisco. She studied digital media at the University of the West of England, Bristol. Her practice and teaching experience spans painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, and book art. She has been involved in theaters in Taiwan and also ShadowLight Productions in San Francisco.

**GABRIELA GARCIA** (Ensemble) completed her MFA acting degree from USC where she trained in Lecoq and Grotowski movement techniques under Andy Robinson and David Bridel. She has had success in commercials and



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independent films, appearing in spots for YouTube, Conde Nast, Credit Karma, OneWest Bank, USA Network, and others, as well as in the indie film *Actors Anonymous*, directed by James Franco, and *Case 347*, starring Maya Stojan, out in 2018. Gabriela also works as a movement teacher and talent scout for acting conservatories in the greater Los Angeles area.

**ARIEL LAURYN** (Ensemble) is a puppeteer, physical comedian, and theater maker based in Brooklyn. She has performed with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Off Broadway), Puppet Kitchen, Trusty Sidekick, Columbia Stages, Physical Comedy Lab, and LES Shakespeare. Her original works have been produced by CalArts, Fringe Festivals, Dixon Place, Triskelion Arts, The Pit Loft, and The Tank. MFA Physical Theater (Dell'Arte International).

**ROSE NISKER** (Ensemble) is a dancer, theater performer, and aerial rope/fabric artist. She's performed at venues across the globe including six tours to Indonesia, EXPO '86 Vancouver, and the World Festival of Sacred Music at the Hollywood Bowl. She holds a BA from UCLA in World Arts and Cultures, is a principal artist with renowned Balinese performing arts company Gamelan Sekar Jaya, and the Artistic Director of Les Aeriellles, an Oakland-based aerial youth arts troupe.

**LEAH OGAWA** (Ensemble) is originally from Yamanashi, Japan. She is a puppeteer, actor, dancer, and model based in New York City. She graduated from Sara Lawrence College where she studied puppetry with Dan Hurlin and Tom Lee. Her recent credits include *Headless Wolf* (Roulette), *Shank's Mare* (Hawai'i tour & La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club), and *Dynamo* (Target Margin). She is currently an artist-in-residence for Object Movement Puppetry Festival at The Center at West Park.

**FRED C. RILEY III** (Assistant Director/Ensemble) has honed his skills writing, directing, choreographing, building, and performing for such companies as Imago, Tears of Joy Theatre, The Center for Puppetry Arts, Shadowlight Productions, and Ping Chong and Company. Skilled in many forms of puppetry from Czech Black to marionettes, intimate to spectacle, he is ready for any challenge. He is proud to have worked with great directors such as Janie Geiser, Jon Ludwig, Ping Chong, Josef Krofta, and Larry Reed.

**MOHAMMAD TALANI** (Digital Media Director/Ensemble) Born in Iran, Mohammad is a Berkeley-based musician, actor, and videographer. He has collaborated in several fields as an actor, editor, music performer, and producer with different artists including Bahrām Beyzāie, Mohsen Namjoo, Babak Jalali, and others. He is a member of the band Kiosk, a pioneering Iranian rock band.

**DINA ZARIF** (Costumes/Ensemble) is a performer, musician, and vocalist. She has co-composed original music and sung in *Home*, a theatrical dance performance. Zarif also performed classical repertoire at venues such as Red Poppy Art House, MAPP and Mission culture center. Her recent music project is "Love song from around the world," a duet with harp. She performed in a reading of Beyzāie's *Ardaviraf's Report* and most recently she performed the role of "Dancer/Singer" in Mr. Beyzāie's newest play, *Tarabnameh*, a Persian traditional musical in Stanford.

**FICTIONVILLE STUDIO** is the production company of husband and wife team, Hamid Rahmanian and Melissa Hibbard. Together they have created film, book, graphic and fine art, photography, and theater projects that span two decades. Their work has won numerous awards, been selected to premiere at prestigious venues including the Sundance Film Festival, Venice Film Festival,



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Toronto Film Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Honolulu Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Their films have been seen around the world on BBC, Channel 4, Al Jazeera, and PBS, among other international outlets. They have always strived to create work that is multi-dimensional and provocative, offering a unique glimpse into worlds that are otherwise unknown and little explored. Their recent works include the seminal work *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings*, a 600-page tome that retells the stories of the Persian Book of Kings by the poet Ferdowsi.

**BANU PRODUCTIONS** is a production and event management company owned by Nasim Yazdani and based in Dubai, UAE. Banu is active in promoting, engaging, and fostering cross-cultural dialogues and inspiration to showcase ethnic diversity by supporting and creating different art and cultural programs. Banu has advanced into further meaningful artistic projects and activities to achieve the goal of connecting the world through a cultural, intellectual, and educational experience with fundraising for selected charity organizations.

**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 Theatre Wing Design Award.

*Major funding provided by The Neda Nobari Foundation, Hamid Shafipour and Fereshteh Amin, Tahbazof Family Foundation, Nasiri Foundation, Bijan and Soraya Amin Foundation, Strypemonde Foundation, Maximum Difference Foundation, Saeed and Samira Amidi, Susan Morshed, Kian Amidhozour, Farid Falsafi and Afsaneh Vali Najad, Lily Sarafan, Farzam and Azadeh Hariri and Farshid and Guila Zanjani, Maximum Difference Foundation, Shahab Tehrani and Nazila Habibizad, Babak Agha and Meroeh Meraji, Shahin Jansepar, Majid & Maryam Rahimian, Maryam Ansari and Nader Ansari.*

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Neda Nobari, Neda Amidi, Bitia Shafipour, Steven McIntosh, Sheila Canby, Ahmad Sadri, Mahsa Hakimi, Parastou Mabodi, James Longley, Scott V. Burkhardt, Gregory P. Scalco, Paul Drescher Ensemble, Ahmad Mortazavi, and Shanna Nasiri.

*Feathers of Fire* is represented by Lisa Booth Management, Inc., NYC

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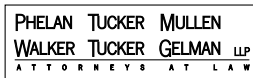
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# MEET KATE

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### **Basic information:**

Katie Welander. Junior from Rockwell City, Iowa. Human physiology major, music minor.

### **What is your position at Hancher?**

Usher.

### **How long have you worked at Hancher?**

I started working at Hancher in the fall, so this will be my second semester.

### **What is your favorite part about Hancher?**

What I love about Hancher is getting to experience so many different art forms. As a science major, it's refreshing to get to do something that I love outside of my major.

### **Do you have any favorite Hancher show you've worked or attended?**

I just recently worked a show for Straight No Chaser, a men's a cappella group, and they were just fantastic. Singing is something I love to do, so it was amazing to get to see them live.

### **Do you have a favorite spot in Iowa City?**

Definitely Kinnick Stadium on game day. The energy inside Kinnick during an Iowa football game is like nothing I've ever experienced before.

### **Do you have any favorite TV shows, movies, bands, or books?**

TV show: *One Tree Hill*. Movies: *Divergent* and *The Greatest Showman*. Band: Fall Out Boy. Book: *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

### **Do you have any favorite classes you've taken at the University of Iowa?**

I took a class called "Harry Potter and the Quest for Enlightenment" last year, and I had a blast. We read the entire *Harry Potter* series and did several small projects that made me see the books in a different way.

### **What are your eventual career goals? How does working at Hancher help you achieve those goals?**

I eventually want to be accepted into a perfusion technology program after I graduate and work with a cardiothoracic surgery team in the operating room. Working at Hancher is valuable because it has helped me to improve my communication and problem-solving skills. These skills are important in all aspects of life, but are especially valuable when working in the hospital setting.



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Past events this season:



**1 KJ Sanchez**

September 7, 2017  
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**2 Eid al-Adha Dinner**

UI Muslim Student Association  
September 9, 2017  
Stanley Café

**3 Niyaz dance workshop**

September 29, 2017  
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**4 Niyaz**

September 30, 2017  
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**5 G. Willow Wilson**

A Superhero for Generation Why  
October 8, 2017  
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**6 Amir ElSaffar master class**

February 6, 2018  
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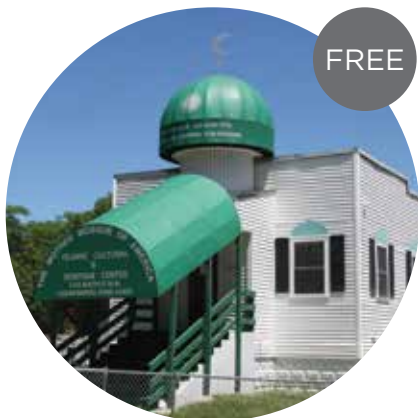
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- Full café open two hours prior to showtime
- Second floor bar open following the performance



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