

The Wallis in collaboration with Mark Amin presents

The Spectacular Cinematic Shadow Play

**FEATHERS OF FIRE: A PERSIAN EPIC**

**Making its Debut at The Wallis for Thirteen Performances Only**

**October 20 – 29, 2017**

(Beverly Hills, CA September 27) After sold-out performances at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and UCLA's Freud Playhouse, the cinematic marvel *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic* makes its first appearance at the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** (The Wallis) on October 20 for a limited nine-day engagement. Conceived, designed and directed by



Hamid Rahmanian, *Feathers of Fire* was inspired by *Shahnameh*, the 10th-century book of epic Persian poetry that he adapted in 2013 into a lavishly illustrated book for contemporary audiences. Using shadow puppetry to create stunning “live animation” on a cinema-size screen, the action-packed tale follows a pair of star-crossed lovers, Zaul and Rudabeh, whose shared love triumphs against all odds. Each performance will be followed by a live 20-minute behind-the-scenes presentation exploring the technique of shadow puppetry. *Feathers of Fire* was created in collaboration with Larry Reed and ShadowLight Productions. The Farhang Foundation is the community sponsor.

The artistic style and visually stunning imagery created by Rahmanian encompass more than 500 years of visual arts from cultures ranging from India to the Mediterranean Sea (c. 14th – 19th centuries). “*Feathers of Fire* has elements from the *Jungle Book*, *Rapunzel* and *Romeo and Juliet*,” says Hamid Rahmanian. “But it precedes all of these stories. Zaul's story is over 1,000 years old – that's what makes it so universal.”

“*Feathers of Fire* is like nothing we have presented on our stages before,” said Paul Crewes, The Wallis' Artistic Director. “It is cinematic in size, scale and storytelling. This innovative production mixes projections and animation with live performance in a new and brilliant manner.”

Single tickets are now available from \$35 – \$125. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [TheWallis.org/Feathers](http://TheWallis.org/Feathers), call 310.746.4000, or stop by in person at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the

Performing Arts Ticket Services located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Ticket prices subject to change.

The Wallis also offers three different options to subscribe to the 2017/18 season: the Premium Subscription Series; the Design-Your-Own option; and the new 3-show Flex Pass for \$99, designed especially for busy young professionals—39 and younger—giving the most flexibility to join The Wallis family of subscribers. Learn more at [TheWallis.org/Subscribe](http://TheWallis.org/Subscribe).

### **About *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic***

Suitable for all ages, *Feathers of Fire* tells the enthralling tale of Zaul and Rudabeh, two young 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*.

Taking inspiration from one of the most primitive methods of telling stories (“Imagine you are in the cave, and you have a fire, and first thing to come is your shadow,” Rahmanian told the *Los Angeles Times*), “*Feathers of Fire* adapts the techniques of San Francisco “shadow master” Larry Reed—inventor of a dramatic protruding mask—to create a cinematic spectacle.

Utilizing eight actors, 160 puppets and 15 masks and costumes, *Feather of Fire* also projects 158 animated backgrounds onto a vast 15 by 30-foot screen on the Bram Goldsmith Stage. Rahmanian’s graphics, derived from the visual tradition of the region, are rendered as puppets, costumes, masks, scenography and digital animation, all of which come to life in a “live animation” on a cinema-size screen.

The *Feathers of Fire* original score is by acclaimed Iranian composers Loga Ramin Torkian and Azam Ail of the band Niyaz, who have been described by the *Huffington Post* as “an evolutionary force in contemporary Middle Eastern music.”

*Feathers of Fire* has toured in such countries as Taiwan, Poland and Canada, garnering international acclaim. Filmmaker Frances Ford Coppola called the show “Fantastic! One of the great epics of all time and my favorite *Shahnameh* brought to life in a spectacular fashion by Hamid Rahmanian with shadow puppet design and cinematic wizardry.”

### **About Hamid Rahmanian**

Creator, designer and director, Hamid Rahmanian is a 2014 Guggenheim Fellow. He 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* which he entitled [\*Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings\*](#) (2013). *Feathers of Fire* utilizes internationally recognized theater director Larry Reed's hallmark shadow casting methods. Reed is one of the few American *dalangs* (“shadow masters”) of traditional Balinese *Wayang Kulit* style.

“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. 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.”

**About Mark Amin:**

Mark Amin is the founder and CEO of Sobini Films, a film production and financing company. Most recently, Amin produced Sony Picture Classics' *Miles Ahead* starring Don Cheadle and IFC's *Good Kill* starring Ethan Hawke. Amin's upcoming projects include a theatrical reboot of the Zorro franchise and *Russ & Roger*, starring Will Ferrell and Josh Gad. Prior to Sobini, Amin served as Vice Chairman of Lionsgate Entertainment. During his nine-year term, Lionsgate produced and distributed such films as *Monster's Ball*, which earned Halle Barry an Academy Award for Best Actress, and *Crash*, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture. Previously, Amin founded Trimark Pictures and served as Chairman and CEO until the company merged with Lionsgate. Amin's past credits include the critically acclaimed *Eve's Bayou* starring Samuel Jackson, the Emmy Award-winning [“The Simple Life of Noah Dearborn”](#) starring Sidney Poitier, and *Frida*, which garnered six Academy Award nominations.

**About the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts:**

Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented more than 150 dance, theatre, opera, classical music and family programs to an ever-expanding audience. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Paul Crewes and Managing Director Rachel Fine, The Wallis brings audiences world-class theater, dance and music, performed by many of the world's most talented and sought-after artists. Featuring eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its notability as the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis offers original and revered works from across the U.S. and around the globe.

The mission of The Wallis is to create, present and celebrate unique performing arts events and educational programs that reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community. Nominated for 28 Ovation Awards, four L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards and the recipient of six architectural awards, The Wallis is a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot venue that celebrates the classic and the modern and was designed by Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA of Studio Pali Fekete architects. The building features the restored, original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places) that serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and houses the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, GRoW at The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education (a gift of Gregory Annenberg Weingarten and Family and the Annenberg Foundation) and the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater. Together, these structures embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike.

The Official Sponsors of The Wallis' 2017/18 Season include: Delta Air Lines (Official Airline Sponsor), Montage Beverly Hills (Preferred Hotel) and Mercedes-Benz of Beverly Hills (Official Automotive Sponsor).

For the complete listing of all Theater @ The Wallis programs visit [www.TheWallis.org/Theater](http://www.TheWallis.org/Theater).

**About Farhang Foundation:**



Farhang Foundation is a non-religious, non-political and not-for-profit foundation established in 2008 to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large. The foundation supports a broad range of academic activities in Southern California by funding university programs, publications and conferences. The foundation also supports diverse cultural programs such as the celebration of Nowruz, Shabe-Yalda, Mehregan, theater and dance performances, film screenings and poetry readings in Southern California. And, in cooperation with various cultural and academic institutions, Farhang Foundation funds major programs and exhibitions about Iran and its culture. However, the content, viewpoints or biases expressed by individual artists, academics, institutions or events supported by the foundation belong solely to each individual party and do not necessarily reflect the views of Farhang Foundation. For more info visit [Farhang.org](http://Farhang.org).

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#### TICKET INFORMATION:

**What:** *Feathers of Fire: A Persian Epic*  
Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts  
Bram Goldsmith Theater  
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

**When:** Friday, October 20 – Sunday, October 29, 2017  
Performance Schedule: Tuesdays – Fridays at 7:30pm; Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm & 7:30pm.

**Tickets:** Single tickets: \$35 – \$125 (prices subject to change)  
Online – [TheWallis.org/Feathers](http://TheWallis.org/Feathers)  
By Phone – 310.746.4000  
Box Office – Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts Ticket Services  
9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA, 90210

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