



TIRGAN

July
25 - 28



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June 12, 2019, Toronto ON

Tirgan Festival is excited to announce the arrival of its much anticipated biennial event, July 25-28, 2019 in Toronto, Canada, presented by TD Bank.



What is Tirgan?

Tirgan refers to an ancient Persian/Iranian festival traditionally held in the month of July, also known as Jashn-e Tirgan (The feast of Tīre-gan). It coincides with other midsummer festivals, celebrated with music, dancing, poetry, and serving authentic foods, and Toronto's 2019 edition of Tirgan promises to delight!

Tirgan Festival 2019 is currently one of the world's largest celebration of Iranian arts and culture; taking place in Toronto, and includes 230+ artists, 30+ free events, 28 retailers, and 8 restaurants, and 2 traditional teahouses for the over 160,000 visitors who flock to experience this Festival.

This year's theme is UNITY, honouring our historical commitment to the celebration of diversity, talent, freedom, and equality. Through music, dance, theatre, culinary delights and more, Tirgan Festival highlights the richness of the contemporary and traditional arts and culture of Iran.

Tirgan Festival 2019 is presented by **TD Bank**, and brought to you by our sponsors, including our Platinum Sponsor **Options**, our Diamond Sponsors **Cameron Abassi**, **Kantium Development and Construction**, **PHD Furniture**, and **Reza Ahklaghi**, among others. For a complete listing of our partners and sponsors please visit our website [sponsor page](#).

A commendable group of 400+ hard-working volunteers makes the Festival happen for four exhilarating days at some of Toronto's most iconic performance venues including Harbourfront Centre, **St. Lawrence Centre for the Art**, the **Michener Institute of Education**, and **The Distillery Historic District**.

*"On behalf of Tirgan Festival, I am pleased to welcome friends, fans, and everyone to the 2019 edition of the Tirgan Festival in Toronto, Canada. This year we are excited to bring more talent and more Iranian culture to thousands of people in the city," said **Tirgan Festival CEO Mehrdad Ariannejad**. "Along with Harbourfront Centre and The Distillery Historic District, this year we have added two more venues to the festival, the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, and the Michener Institute of Education at UHN in order to expand the program and offer a better variety to the audience. This initiative has given us the opportunity to invite even better-known artists because of the higher capacity of our new venues."*

He added, *"For the first time in the history of Tirgan, we are holding a conference on Iranian Intellectualism, inviting more than 10 scholars from universities across the globe to discuss the subject on four different panels at the Michener Institute of Education at UHN. In a way, these panels are going to review the modern history of Iran during a cultural festival, combining art and scholarly work."*

What's in store for audiences at Tirgan 2019? Both ticketed and free events, with child care available for some, from musical masterpieces to kid-friendly entertainment to intellectually stimulating conferences to late night dancing under the stars - Tirgan has something for everyone!

MUSIC AND DANCE

Tirgan Opening Ceremony: Manushan Band Featuring Shahrokh Moshkin

Ghalam Harbourfront Centre, ticketed event



Paris- based Iranian band and a prominent voice in the world music scene, Manushan launches the festival with music and dance not to be missed! Encompassing a mixture of world music, gypsy, flamenco, and jazz styles and new renditions of classical Iranian music, Aida Nosrat and Babak Amirmobasher infuse classical European music into their own contemporary style, mixing a culture of melodies beyond borders.

What's music without dance? Internationally renowned dancer and choreographer Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam takes the stage in an unconventional twist - for contemporary extremists, women's singing is forbidden and in traditional minds, men's dancing is considered unconventional. Manushan's musical performance coupled with Moshkin Ghalam's choreographies constitutes an artistic resistance against both of these concepts.

Hamed Nikpay Band SUFI FUNK Fleck Dance Theatre Harbourfront Centre, ticketed event



To answer your first question - Hamed Nikpay coined the term “Sufi Funk” to introduce a new form of fusion music with strong elements of Sufism and mysticism of the East, infused and enriched with diverse melodies of African culture. He’s brought the best of the Middle East and North Africa into the Western context on stage for an all-embracing cultural mosaic that is the world of “Sufi Funk”.

Nikpay has been at the forefront of creating and performing fusion world music for many years. In his concert, Hamed Nikpay performs songs from his body of work in the last decade as well as a few trailblazing compositions he has recently recorded in collaboration with other artists called “Sufi Funk” or “Persian/Iranian Sufi Funk”.

His not-to-be-missed performance for Tiran 2019 introduces a new genre to the world music scene with a live band of world-renowned international musicians, including Dan Sistos (director, Guitar) Albert Abis (Bass), and Edoardo Tancredi (Drums). Lead vocals are the aforementioned Hamed Nikpay (Oud, Tanbour, Electric Guitar), with guest musician Leo Chekiapov (Doduk, Clarinet, and Saxophone).

Kayhan Kalhor And Kiya Tabassian Jane Mallett Theatre St Lawrence Centre ticketed event



GRAMMY Award winner and internationally acclaimed kamancheh (spiked fiddle) virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor performs with virtuoso setar player Kiya Tabassian in a refined concert filled with inspiration, showing the fast-changing face of traditional Persian music and an unprecedented opportunity to witness this collaboration of two world-renowned soloists in an intimate, acoustic atmosphere!

For this concert, Kayhan Kalhor will perform on the setar, his second instrument to the bowed kamancheh. The setar, which he has rarely played on concert stages, is a four-stringed lute with 25 movable frets, often associated with Sufism. He will be joined by Kiya Tabassian, his student of many years, for an evening of exquisite improvisations.

Kayhan Kalhor is a founding member of *Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble* which received a GRAMMY for "Sing Me Home" in 2016. He has composed and played music for Iran's most renowned vocalists including *Mohammad Reza Shajarian* and *Shahram Nazeri*, and has toured as a soloist with ensembles and orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and Orchestre National de Lyon.

Kiya Tabassian, a virtuoso setar-player, has been for years a founding member and driving force of the ensemble "Constantinople" and knows how to awaken the universal power of music in our hearts.

Kayhan Kalhor and Ali Akbar Moradi Jane Mallett Theatre at St Lawrence Centre



Two virtuosos perform together for a rare evening of centuries-old and deeply-rooted Persian and Kurdish improvisations. Kamancheh (spiked fiddle) master Kayhan Kalhor will be joined by Ali Akbar Moradi, a master of the Sufi tanbur (lute) and ambassador of Kurdish music worldwide.

With improvisation as the focal point of their intensely spiritual and emotional music, Kalhor and Moradi bring the audience into a trance-like state through ecstatic rhythms and beautiful melodies.

Ali Akbar Moradi is a master tanbur (Persian lute) player and performed throughout the world with the most renowned Kurdish and Persian singers. His tanbur playing is mesmerizing and deeply enriched with ancient techniques behind novel melodies of Iran and Mesopotamia region. Moradi's soulful performance coupled with his special vocal mode masterfully combines different elements of Kurdish and Persian musical culture in a timeless and ethereal environment.

We invite music lovers of every background to immerse themselves into an emotional and enchanting improvisation by masters of Persian and Kurdish music.

Mohsen Namjoo Bluma Appel Theatre, St Lawrence Centre for the Arts, ticketed event



A front liner in bridging classical Persian music with Western styles, Mohsen Namjoo's unique music style resembles a patchwork of Iranian blues, rock, and folk. Namjoo's lyrics are simultaneously blurred between the venerated Hafez and Rumi poems and his own authentic poetry.

Considered a phenomenon within Iranian contemporary culture, Mohsen Namjoo has pioneered a re-adaptation of Persian music. His use of madcap words to liberate and infuse our musical imaginations with irony and sarcasm is an emancipated form of singing not often heard in North America. Even while singing in Persian, Namjoo is unequivocally committed to a modern departure from conventional forms of Iranian music and transcends any language barrier. His chameleonic voice echoes ordinary chatter in the bazaar in a melancholic yet magical environment, showcasing the incongruity and unity of Iranian culture today.

Parissa and Ensemble Bluma Appel Theatre at St Lawrence Centre ticketed event *Latecomers may not be admitted*



The Grande Dame of Iranian classical music will perform live at Tirgan Festival 2019! The legendary Parissa is accompanied by her masterful ensemble of musicians including Pejman Hadadi, Ali Pajooreshgar, Amir Hosein Pourjavady and Saeed Kamjoo.

Parissa is a renowned vocalist of classical Persian music (radif) who continues to play a singular role in promoting, preserving, and elevating the best in her genre. Radif is based on improvisation within a modal structure known as dastgah.

For her performance at Tirgan Festival 2019, Parissa takes a mystical journey in the dastgāh of Māhur and Āvāz-e Esfahān before returning to Māhur, singing poems from Hafiz, Sa'di, and Mowlana (Rumi). Parissa's voice conveys profound spiritual concepts, passion for love, the beloved, and praising of the beauty of nature. The rich imagery of the words comes alive through Parissa's moving rendition of the poetry.

Golbang World Music Concert Stage Harbourfront Centre FREE event



"I do not know of another group with such a musical width, this is what world music sounds like when musicians from different cultures find each other and truly interact. The music is traditionally Persian, symphonically Western, popular and folksy – it is ingenious, nuanced, modern and still recognizable." This is world-class world music not to be missed!" - Lotta Johansson, producer, Musikens hus in Rättvik

A delightful meeting point between Baluchi, Persian, Kurdish, Afghan and Swedish music traditions, Golbang creates musical magic, giving audiences the opportunity to treat themselves to one of the loveliest voices ever in a groovy interplay for peace and love.

Golbang (Persian for "the song of the Nightingale") is a modern and limitless world music band with an entirely unique sound. An important part of the Golbang magic is the distinct sounds from different cultures that are present in all their songs – as well as their improvisational ability!

In many ways, Golbang is a reflection of the nine members of the group, and each song can be performed in at least eight different ways. The variety of rhythms that the band uses can transform into completely new shapes, depending on who is listening and who is interpreting.

Shahin Najafi St Lawrence Centre for the Arts, ticketed event Latecomers may not be admitted



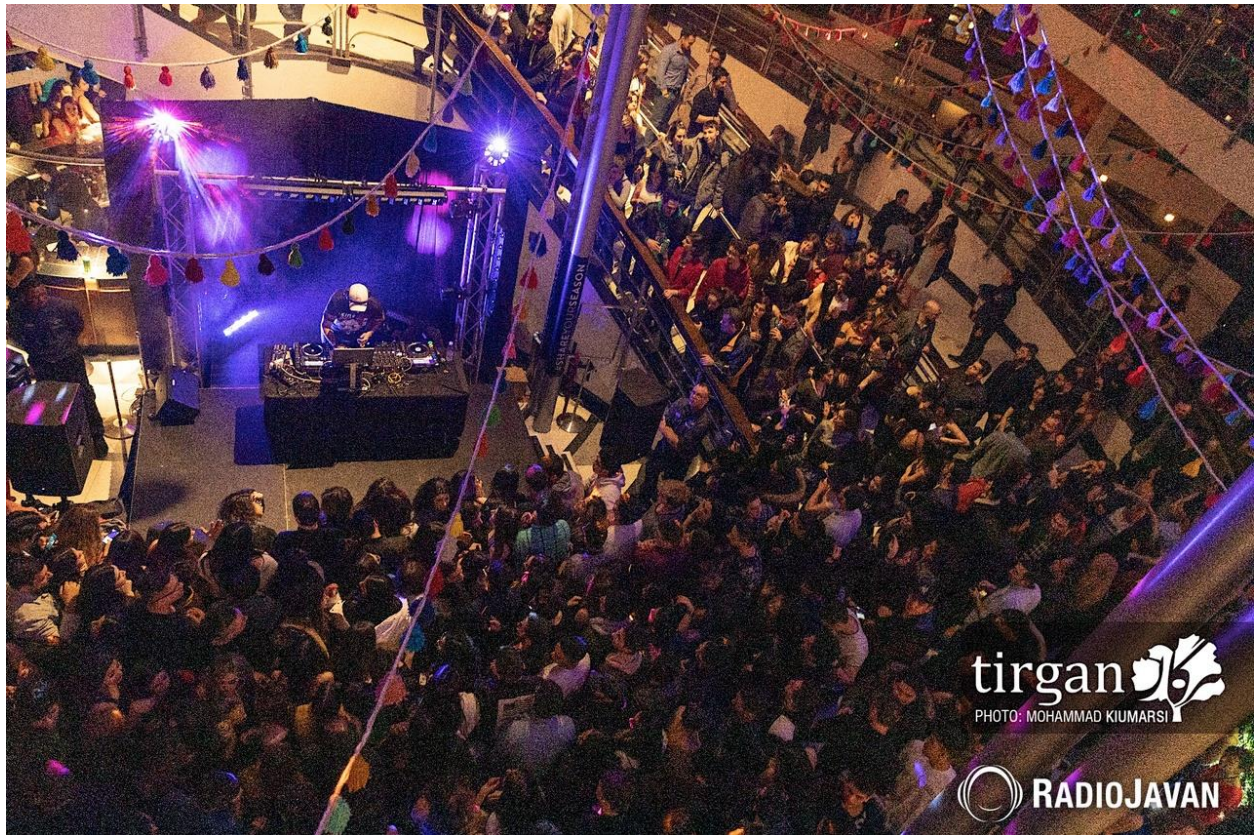
Shahin Najafi storms the stage with a crushing performance at the 2019 Festival, performing songs from his new album "The Third Gender" with a full band of world-class artists. Shahin Najafi is an Iranian musician, songwriter, and singer known for his taboo-breaking and provocative songs about religion, poverty, child labour, sexism and other topics that extremists would like to avoid. Shahin stands apart as a musician who brings both catchy riffs and meaningful revelations to every performance. In his work nothing appears to be sacred; his lyrics constantly question political authoritarianism, social injustice, ideological dogmas, and cultural taboos. His music assimilates elements of hip-hop, rock, folk and most recently jazz fusion. His new album, *The Third Gender* is a blend of folk melodies and contemporary influences and heralds a revolutionary new direction for Najafi's music.

For the first part of his performance at Tirgan Festival, Najafi combines jazz with aspects of traditional Gilaki music from northern Iran, including a reworking of a poem by celebrated Iranian poet "Esmail Khoi", and one is an adaptation of a folk song. The second act includes his popular hits along with the live improvisations by his band.

Shahin has toured around the world, in Europe, the US, and Canada, and has performed alongside The Gürzenich Orchestra in Cologne and Blackfield in Tel Aviv amongst others.

LATE NIGHT PROGRAMMING

Late Night Show – DJ Taba (hosted by Radio Javan) Harbourfront Centre ticketed event



Radio Javan hosts 2 nights of high-energy dance events with one of its most popular DJs, Vahid Tabatabaei aka DJ Taba from the popular “Abo Atash” podcast show on Radiojavan.com. After a full day of cultural activities come and grab a drink, kick back and relax, or dance the night away to the tunes of one of the best Iranian DJs around!

DJ Taba has over 14 years of experience as a DJ, musician, and master of ceremonies, known for top Persian releases Abo Atash, Old School Persian Songs, and the best Persian dance music. He has quickly become one of the most sought after DJs in Iranian communities around the world due to his unique style and ability to deliver smooth mixes and masterfully mix a wide variety of musical genres.

THEATRE EVENTS

Khale Sooske, directed by Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam (performed in Persian) [Jane Mallett Theatre St Lawrence Centre for the Arts ticketed event](#)



Based on Bijan Mofid's masterpiece, Khale Sooske has been performed numerous times on stage to outstanding reviews by audiences and critics. A popular musical drama by revered playwright and stage director Bijan Mofid, it was first performed in 1968 to extraordinary praise., and is now a part of Tirgan 2019. A graduate in the history of art and theatre from the Paris 8 University, Shahrokh Moshkin-Ghalams a choreographer, actor, and director. He is also the founder and former artistic director of Nakissa Art Company. He is the first Iranian to be part of the prestigious Comédie-Française troupe. In Khale Sooske, Moshkin-Ghalams takes a humorous and playful approach to storytelling and brings to life a modern rendition of a beloved classic.

Zahhak: The Legend of the Serpent King Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre ticketed event



This fantastic tale will delight audiences young and old with every movement on stage. Join us! Originally penned in the tenth century AD by the Persian poet, Ferdowsi, The Serpent King tells a story for the ages of father vs. son and good vs. evil - a Persian masterpiece, still relevant today, over a thousand years since its creation.

Featuring a stunning array of intricate, handmade shadow puppet figures silhouetted on a backlit screen, Zahhak: The Legend of the Serpent King blends mythologies alongside historical events with limitless artistic improvisations. The Legend of the Serpent King introduces us to some of the most well-known Persian names such as Jamshid, Kaveh, Feraydun, and Faranak magnificently depicting our cultural roots and the underlying values of contemporary culture.

The Silver Poet Bluma Appel Theatre, St Lawrence Centre ticketed event



Presenting “Silver Poet”, an exceptional play by Houshang Touzie portraying the story of love & sacrifice of Fereydoun Farrokhzad.

Fereydoun Farrokhzad was a singer, performer, poet, actor, political scientist, opposition member and the leading TV and Radio Showman of Iran. Lucid, eloquent, and intellectually structured, Fereydoun Farrokhzad is considered to be one of Iran’s finest artists. His life can be seen as a tragedy, or a historical play, or a political drama, or as one part of a vast dramatic cycle which helped to generate Iran’s contemporary national identity. His television show “Mikhakeh Noghrei”, (Silver Carnation), ran from 1976 to 1978. Through it he was able to make connections and meet many other Iranian artists, giving them a platform and launching them into the spotlight.

Houshang Touzie is a renowned Iranian playwright and actor. He has written and acted in numerous plays in exile, including his latest work based on his personal friendship with Fereydoun Farrokhzad.

Houshang Touzie performs the role of Fereydoun and is accompanied by a talented group of artists who join him on stage.

CULINARY and CULTURAL

It wouldn't be a festival without something to eat, something to drink, and souvenirs of the time you've spent there! Tirgan Festival 2019 is pleased to offer something for everyone, all located at Harbourfront Centre, along with childcare for tired little legs!

Persian Tea House Harbourfront Centre



Step into one of our exotic Persian traditional Teahouses and be transported all the way to Iran! Run by the Nawranj Iranian Association, these authentic teahouses are the place to go to relax with a cup of perfect Persian steeped tea! Feeling the heat of a summer day? Juices and authentic traditional ice cream will cool you down in no time!

Taste of Iran Harbourfront Centre



6 different restaurants serving a variety of Iranian foods and other treats!

Iranian Bazaar Harbourfront Centre



Looking for a memory of your weekend experiencing Tirgan? Over 24 vendors are offering different products including Arts, Crafts, Books, Confectioneries, Jewelry, and more to tempt you!

CONFERENCE - Iranian Intellectuals: Lineages and Legacies



Looking for something to stimulate your mind as well as your senses?

Tirgan Festival is proud to host an incredible series of four panel discussions on the history and evolution of intellectualism in Iran. The panelists—academic experts in the field who have been invited from all around the globe—will discuss the history of intellectualism, and its relationship with the social and political trajectory of modern Iran from the Qajar period to today. Each panel will have a different focus but position its topics and themes within the overall context of the series. A question and answer session will complete each panel. Refreshments and lunch will also be provided throughout the day. Visit our [website](#) for the complete schedule.

2019 Tirgan Festival, presented by TD Bank

July 25 – 28, 2019, multiple locations, Toronto

Free – \$100.00

Visit <https://tirgan.ca/tirgan2019/> for tickets and more information

For interviews, images and more media information contact Sue

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