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## CULTURE

# Symphonic trilogy toasts Persian poem

**78-minute concert at Roy Thomson Hall focuses on 3 stories of the epic Shahnameh**

Aug 01, 2008 04:30 AM

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**SHABNAM JANET JANANI**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The first-ever multimedia concert production of the *Persian Trilogy*, based on the Persian national epic poem *Shahnameh*, will make history tomorrow at Roy Thomson Hall.

Members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of JoAnn Falletta, music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Virginia Symphony orchestras, will play all three parts of the composition in a uniquely formatted celebration of the *Shahnameh's* 1,000th anniversary.

Composed by Iranian-American composer Behzad Ranjbaran between 1989 and 2000, the concert will be a highlight of the Seventh International Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, which got underway yesterday at the Park Hyatt Hotel.

"It's a special honour to present the whole three parts, for the first time together, in a diverse cultural city like Toronto," said Ranjbaran. "This is an opportunity to reveal classic Iranian art as part of a much larger fabric of Toronto multiculturalism."

The *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) was composed in the 11th century by the Persian poet Ferdowsi, who took 30 years to write its 50,000 rhyming couplets.

"The *Shahnameh* is a universal piece of art and, through the *Persian Trilogy*, I become more familiar with its virtue stories," Falletta said in an interview.

The 78-minute concert focuses on three of the best-loved stories of the epic: "Seven Passages of Rostam," "The Seemorgh," and "The Blood of Seyavash."

Images of more than 50 Persian miniatures from past centuries will be projected on a giant screen during the concert. Traditional scene-narrating (*naqqali*) by master storyteller Morshed Valiollah Torabi will make it a multimedia event.

"The storytelling, the poetry, the projection of images and the orchestra playing, together is a big task and a unique experience," Falletta said.

The conference gathers 200 scholars to present current research on Iran, said Mohamad Tavakoli-Taraghi, conference program chair and U of T history professor. It includes public seminars on social, cultural and historical issues, 25 films and a book exhibition.

Just the facts

**What:** Shahnameh Millennium Symphonic Concert**When:** Tomorrow, 8 p.m.**Where:** Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St.**Tickets:** \$35-\$70 @ 416-872-4255Comments on this story are moderated | [Login to Comment](#) [Commenting Guidelines](#)

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Posted by MarryA at 7:16 PM Friday, August 01 2008

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