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Iranshahr Magazine, Los Angeles, CA.

August 21, 2015.

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Los Angeles Awaiting The Scarlet Stone's Premier

“The Scarlet Stone”, Retelling the Tale of National Identity

The Scarlet Stone is the title of a drama that will be brought to stage on August 29th, 2015 at UCLA's Royce Hall. It is a show that has caught the attention of the Iranian community of art enthusiasts located in Southern California from long ago.

Shahrokh Yadegari has adapted the script for The Scarlet Stone based on a poem with the same title by Siavash Kasrai. However, this work of art has gone beyond the distinguished poem of Siavash Kasrai by telling a story as long as the history of Iran itself through an amazing return to the Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, and in the process, adding in a new form to the Iranian art history in diaspora.

The Scarlet Stone is an allegory of the emblem given to Tahmineh by Rostam, the Iranian mythological hero, so that if their child was born a girl, she would tie the emblem to their daughter's hair and to his arm if the child was a boy. In this way, the warrior father could identify his child.

Rostam and Sohrab is one of the most important stories of the *Shahnameh*. Alas! Rostam recognizes the scarlet stone tied to the arm of his thriving son too late --- the moment when no elixir is effective against the father's imposed deep wound on the son's lifeless body. This old narrative, which is without a doubt among worldwide and Iranian masterpieces, now depicts a new story for restating the retrieval of Iranian's national identity in the form of a drama which is a mixture of minstrelsy, dancing, music and performing arts in a scene provoked by the fire of love through Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam's art.

In an interview with *Iranshahr*, Gordafarid, who is the narrator (Ferdowsi) in this work and comes on stage as a unique narrator like her proud successors (Iran's mentors and minstrelsies), states that:

“I see the tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab the tragedy of unknowns and misunderstandings. A tragedy of unawareness. In interpretation of The Scarlet Stone drama, more than anything I have heard some friends consider Rostam as the symbol of tyranny for the current government and Sohrab as the symbol of innocent and defenseless youth. In my opinion, this is an incorrect interpretation resulted from ignorance. In this story, Sohrab is an invader and even a trespasser to Iran's borders. Sohrab is not the symbol of Iran's innocent youth at all. Youths living in Zakhak's period are the symbol of innocence whose bodies, souls and thoughts were cruelly ruined. Symbols of Iran's innocent youth are Siavash and even Iraj.

In her analysis of Sohrab's character, Gordafarid states that:

“However, Sohrab is sympathetic because he, too, is a victim like Rostam and both are captives and victims of countless deceits and conspiracies. In Sohrab’s journey, different people and conditions go hand in hand so as to prevent any possible resolutions such as:

- Sohrab’s greed and decision to attack Iran, kill the king, seize Iran’s throne so that he can reach the level of the world hero and in short reaching some other greedy ambitions.
- Afrasiyab’s deceits and conspiracies in the path of Sohrab.
- Constant misleading of Sohrab by Barman and Hoorman (two Turani commanders).
- Hajir’s fear and horror (Iranian warrior) of Sohrab’s strength and hiding Rostam’s name and address and his refusal to introduce Rostam to Sohrab.
- Accidental death of Zhende Razm (Sohrab’s uncle), who could be his guide.
- Old Rostam’s fear, panic and pain of this young and fresh invader. Or that fear of defeat that undoubtedly could demoralize Iran’s army and ultimately lead to Iran’s defeat and its seizure by this newly arrived young man. All of these are reasons for Rostam’s unconscious acting for not communicating with Sohrab and ultimately not reaching awareness and recognition.
- Finally, Kay Kāvus’ deceit for not giving the elixir.

Gordafarid adds that:

“Unconscious action is the fundamental act of this tragedy’s hero and this very unconscious action is what turns the situation from felicity to fear and suffering”.

In The Scarlet Stone play, directed by Shahrokh Yadegari and Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam, in addition to Gordafarid, Ms. Ida Saki and Ms. Miriam Peretz, Mr. Afshin Mofid and Mr. Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam have performed on stage and in the shadow of exceptional music composed by Shahrokh Yadegari for this work of art, linking the story of yesterday and today in the form of an exceptional and mesmerizing drama on a stage with most beautiful scenic design techniques. The totality of this work forces the audience to contemplate the boundary between myth and reality, and pushes the find the path to a new thinking and awareness in themselves.

While congratulating the organizers and players of this sumptuous and excellent Iranian drama, *Iranshahr* recommends viewing this play on Sunday, August 29, 2015 to all of its readers.