

*Darya* (pronounced dahr-YAH), meaning "the sea" in Persian, was founded in 1996 through the artistic collaboration between Faraidoun Akhavan and Douglas Hensley. Originally formed as a cultural bridge between traditional Persian music and Canadian audiences, the ensemble has evolved into a sophisticated musical collective dedicated to preserving and reimagining the beauty of Persian classical music.

Named after Keivan Saket's evocative composition "The Sea," Darya embodies the dynamic, ever-changing nature of both the ocean and Persian musical tradition. As the group has grown over nearly three decades, it has welcomed accomplished musicians from diverse backgrounds, creating a rich tapestry of artistic voices united by their passion for Persian classical music.

The ensemble's repertoire spans the full spectrum of Persian musical forms, from traditional folk melodies to contemporary compositions, performed on traditional instruments including tar, setar, santour, ney, oud, tombak, kamanche, daf, and vocals. Through their performances across Victoria, Vancouver Island, and beyond, Darya has established itself as a vital cultural ambassador, introducing audiences to the sophisticated and profound expressive depth of Persian musical expression.

With this expansion of talent and instrumentation, Darya continues its mission of preserving classical Persian musical traditions while exploring innovative interpretations that speak to contemporary audiences. The ensemble represents both the timeless beauty of Persian culture and its living, breathing evolution in the Canadian artistic landscape.

Iranian classical music is built around a sophisticated modal system called dastgaah; think of these as musical universes, each with its own emotional character and melodic patterns yet deeply interconnected. Tonight's performance will take you on a journey through several of these musical worlds, from the passionate Esfahaan to the pastoral Dashti.

Sponsored by



# Darya

ENSEMBLE



Tayebeh Adami - tar  
Faraidoun Akhavan - kamanche, viola, and violin  
Arian Aminalroaya - tombak  
Maryam Badrzadeh - vocals  
Douglas Hensley - oud  
Davoud Jafari - ney

Azar Mirzaei - setar  
Keivan Monfared - santour  
Masoud Manzouri - tar  
Mohammad Sadeghipour - vocals  
Ali Shirazi - daf

# Program

## Part 1

### Pishdaraamad-e Esfahaan / Composer: Ali Asghar Bahari (1905-1995)

A pishdaraamad introduces a dastgaah's character. This haunting piece from one of the 20th century's most revered kamanche masters moves through contemplative opening passages into passionate questioning, before arriving at a complex resolution balancing longing with acceptance.

### Tasnif-e Darya (The Sea) / Composer: Keivan Saket (b. 1961)

This piece lends its name to our ensemble, creating a vivid musical seascape capturing the ocean's ever-changing moods from tranquil calm to dramatic storms. The poetry warns us to remain as dynamic as the sea itself, lest we become stagnant pools.

### Saaz-o Aavaaz-e Shushtari

Free-flowing musical conversations between voice and instruments, unbound by rhythm. In these intimate dialogues, singer and instrumentalist complete each other's musical thoughts.

### Chahaarmezraab-e Shushtari / Composer: Keivan Saket (b. 1961)

Fast-paced, rhythmic pieces with recurring motifs. This highly technical piece showcases intricate musical details and virtuosic playing by contemporary master Saket, known for his innovative fusion of traditional Persian forms.

### Saaz-o Aavaaz-e Homaayun

Homaayun evokes deep contemplation and existential reflection, drawing the listener into profound thoughts distinct from the longing found in other modes.

### Tasnif-e Aghrabe Zolfe Kajet (The Scorpion Curls of Your Hair) / Composer: Aliakbar Sheyda (c. 1843-1906)

A Qajar era master and Renaissance figure, Sheyda was poet, calligrapher, and musician. This piece captures the intoxicating danger of love through the metaphor of the beloved's curls as beautiful yet deadly scorpion tails.

### Tasnif-e Aasemoon Be In Gapi (The Sky of Such Expanse) / Folk music of Shiraz

Regional folk music has profoundly influenced formal dastgaahi music. This beautiful piece from Shiraz represents the living connection between Iran's classical tradition and its folk roots, carrying the voice of the people.

## Part 2

### Chahaarmezraab-e Dashti / Based on an etude by Jalil Shahnaz (1921-2013), arranged by Siamak Aghaei

The legendary "God of tar" revolutionized Persian classical music through virtuosic technique and vivid musical imagery. This piece in the popular Dashti mode showcases the rhythmic brilliance that made Shahnaz a legend, transcended by modern techniques of Aghaei.

### Saaz-o Aavaaz-e Dashti

Dashti evokes open countryside and rural landscapes, carrying the spirit of vast plains and the timeless connection between people and land.

### Tasnif-e Ey Aamaan (Oh Refuge) / Composer: Faramarz Payvar (1933-2009)

A heartfelt plea for sanctuary from separation's ache. This piece is in Shur mode, one of the most beloved dastgaahs, known for its deeply moving character that captures longing and spiritual yearning.

### Daraamad-e Abuataa

Daraamad is very much like a pishdaraamad, but it is not rhythmic and does not explore a range of gushe's from its intended dastgaah. Instead, it simply sets the mood for what is to follow.

### Pishdaraamad-e Abuataa / Composer: Faramarz Payvar (1933-2009)

Payvar revolutionized the santour while creating sophisticated arrangements that introduced polyphony into Persian music. This pishdaraamad introduces the mystical Abuataa mode.

### Saaz-o Aavaaz-e Abuataa

Abuataa expresses joy and happiness while maintaining deep spiritual undertones and an air of mystery, perfect for exploring the connection between earthly emotions and divine transcendence.

### Tasnif-e Baa Man Sanama (With Me, My Beloved) / Composer: Faramarz Payvar (1933-2009)

Performed in gushe Hejaaz from mode Abuataa, demonstrating sophisticated modal relationships through delicate interplay between sound and silence. The lover surrenders completely, finding strange power in choosing to be conquered by beauty.

### Reng-e Dashti / Composer: Reza Mahjoubi, with additions by Abolhassan Saba

Rhythmic concluding pieces traditionally accompanied by dance. The lover rests beside flowing water, knowing petals scatter and wine sours, but in this moment lives music, beauty, and the possibility that love might linger.