



Golden Thread Fairytale Players Present

21 Days That Change the Year

Educational theatre performances incorporating story,
puppets and dance from the Middle East

Directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

Featuring Majd Murad & Mohammad Talani

Puppets & Haft-seen Designed by Mokhtar Pakie

Dance Choreography by Lisa Tateosian

21 DAYS THAT CHANGE THE YEAR frames an ancient tale from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (King's Book of Kings) within contemporary adventures of Dara & Sara, a sister and brother eagerly awaiting the coming of *Nowruz*. Guided by their sweet but somewhat hard-of-hearing granny, Dara & Sara learn about spring cleaning, setting a traditional *Haft-seen* table, the fun rituals of *Charshanbeh-suri*, and the *Sizdeh-bedar* picnic which concludes the rite of spring ceremonies. Fusing history and literature with contemporary themes, *21 Days That Change the Year* offers a multi-cultural event providing children and their families with the richness of Middle Eastern arts and culture.

Please Note:

- This show involves audience participation. We will need two volunteer kids, a girl and a boy to help us tell the story. In addition, 7 children in the audience will be given "S cards" to hand to the actors when called upon.
- *21 Days that Change the Year* is a celebration of the Iranian New Year. It is rooted in the traditional style of traveling players and epic story-telling. It includes poetry and several words in Persian. We don't expect the children to understand these words, only to appreciate hearing them.

The **Shahnameh** by Ferdowsi is arguably one of the most revered literary accomplishments of the Persian literature. A chronicle of the Persian Empire and its great heroes, the *Shahnameh* presents *Nowruz* as the battle of good against evil where Jamshid Shah's triumph over the evil *deev* (demon) frees the enslaved Iranians and leads to celebration and greatness. Through Jamshid's action-packed adventures, we learn the roots of *Nowruz* in Iranian literature.

Celebrating the first day of spring, the exact moment of the equinox, *Nowruz* ceremonies are rooted in pagan rituals of agricultural communities and symbolic representations of the cycle of life. The celebrations begin on the evening prior to the last Wednesday of the year and continue through the 13th day of the new year, encompassing roughly, 21 days.

Charshanbeh-suri or Festival of Fire - The celebration starts in the evening, with people jumping over bonfires singing "*zardi-ye man az toh, sorkhi-ye toh az man*," offering one's paleness to the fire and asking for the fire's red glow in return. Another tradition of this day is to go Trick-or-treating similar to Halloween; people wear disguises and go knocking on doors asking for "Problem-solving nuts."

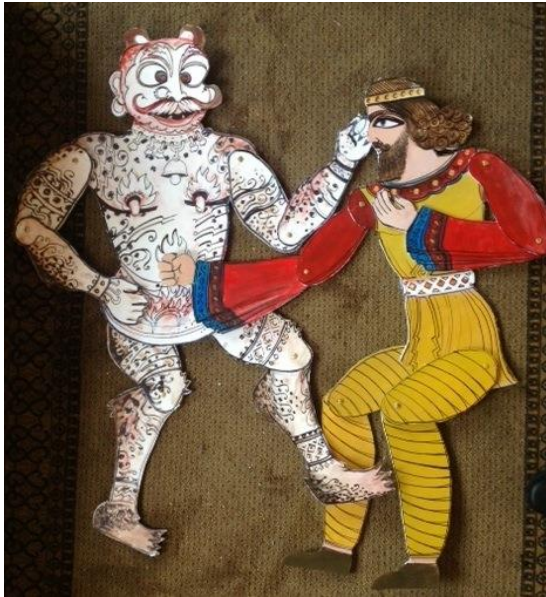
Haft-seen

- *sabzeh* – wheat, barley or lentil sprouts, symbol of spring
- *samanu* - a sweet pudding of wheat germ, symbol of affluence
- *sonbole* – hyacinth, symbol of youth
- *sîr* – garlic, symbol of medicine, keeping diseases away
- *sîb* – apples, symbol of beauty and health
- *sekeh* – coins, symbol of prosperity and good fortune
- *serkeh* – vinegar, disinfects the insides

Sal-Tahvil – is the exact moment of Equinox, which varies every year. In anticipation, the family gathers and celebrates around a traditional meal of rice, fish and herbs.

Sizdeh-bedar – The final ritual of *Nowruz* is an outdoor picnic on the 13th day of the new year. Frequently, *Sizdah-bedar* coincides with the first day of April, or April Fools' Day.

Fairytale Players shows are mindful of California Educational Standards as they serve to enrich all of our offerings. In terms of Theater Arts, artistic perception is stimulated as the students are exposed to less familiar yet exciting and authentic theatrical forms. Historical and cultural dimensions of theatrical performance come to the fore as students are challenged to recognize and explore both the diversity and universality of our endeavors. Our treatments of these varied cultures are carefully cultivated by our choices of fables, myths, legends and tales reflecting English Language Arts guidelines – stories that provoke empathy and understanding, socially relevant and all unifying in nature. History and Social Study standards are also addressed, as we bring to life characters from generations past through dress, dance, music and storytelling traditions.



Golden Thread Fairytale Players engage audiences through text, movement, folk music and dance, and also create language, geography and cultural connections to the Middle East. Reflective practice questions are offered after the performances that discuss specific cultural traditions, locations, and characters for further understanding of the play. The performances include music, improvisational comedic techniques, and audience participation, designed to foster creativity, imagination and impart basic theatre skills.

www.goldenthread.org

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21 Days That Change the Year
A CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ



Touring the Bay Area in 2014

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