



School for autistic kids

In a momentous occasion for the western Iranian province of Hamedan, the largest school specializing in educating autistic children has been inaugurated. The school boasts 18 classrooms, a dark room, a playground, and a pool for aquatic treatment, all designed to meet the special needs of students with autism.

Iranica Desk EXCLUSIVE

When Tehran turned from a not-so-famous village into a small city, it had no more than five neighbor-

Visit the remains of old Tehran in Sangelaj neighborhood

hoods, one of which was Sangelaj. A large number of gardens were built in the neighborhood which had a pleasant atmosphere, only a memory of which remains for us. Sangelaj has always been one of the most important neighborhoods of Tehran; however, numerous building construction projects which have been implemented in the recent decades has helped change its texture.



Sangelaj Theater
majnews.com



Park-e Shahr
visitiran.ir



Mostofi al-Mamalek House
wikipedia.org

hoods, one of which was Sangelaj. A large number of gardens were built in the neighborhood which had a pleasant atmosphere, only a memory of which remains for us. Sangelaj has always been one of the most important neighborhoods of Tehran; however, numerous building construction projects which have been implemented in the recent decades has helped change its texture.

Since the beginning of its establishment, Sangelaj, situated in the western part of the Grand Bazaar of Tehran, was the residence of the wealthy. Perhaps that was why people rebuilt the neighborhood repeatedly in various periods. Although the periodic refurbishments have eroded signs of Safavid and Qajar architecture, it has caused its residents not to leave the neighborhood. The word Sangelaj consists of two parts. Sang

means stone, and raj, which changed to laj over time, means row. In the past, water was divided among people by stones, and this is the reason for naming the neighborhood Sangelaj, a row of stones. The first part of this neighborhood was destroyed during the Pahlavi era, when 25 hectares of it were flattened to build the Park-e Shahr (City Park). Most properties belonged to the two famous characters of the Qajar period,

Moayer al-Mamalek and Mostofi al-Mamalek. Perhaps it was their heirs who slowly started to renovate the neighborhood. That is why the names of these two families are presently on many buildings and gardens of the neighborhood. Bazaar, taaqi (arch), gozar (passage), sabat (a roofing structure with a street beneath it), mosque, school, zoorkhaneh (a Persian gymnasium in which a traditional sport is practiced), ab-anbar

(cistern) and many other old elements of the city have been preserved. An association has been formed in Sangelaj to safeguard the cultural and historical heritage of the neighborhood. Tours of Tehran, held in recent years, have been well received by people. Sangelaj is one of the localities visited by those participating in the tours. One of the most famous structures of the old neighborhood is its theater,

which is still operating. Many famous Iranian theater directors staged their plays in the theater, which was inaugurated in 1955. It lies in the southern part of Park-e Shahr. Sangelaj is reminiscent of a large number of important and nostalgic events that are tied to the history of the capital. The 200-year-old Moayer Garden belonged to Moayer al-Mamalek, who lived there. A palace with a magnificent architecture was in

its small bazaar and Edam Square. Apparently, it was the stable of the elephants of Moayer al-Mamalek. A large number of monuments of the old neighborhood are not open to the public, including Rajabali Mosque, St. George Church, Mostofi House, Mayer Mosque and school, and Doostalikhan Mosque. Sangelaj residents believe that opening each of them can help further familiarize the people with the neighborhood.



Iran's 'Macbeth Zar' to tour St. Petersburg

Iranian theatrical production 'Macbeth Zar,' will grace the stage at the 18th Saint Petersburg Theater Festival, slated to be held from May 23 to June 2. Ebrahim Posht Koohi, the playwright and director, has crafted an exquisite adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth,' blending it with Iran's southern Zar ritual. The play was selected as the piece to close the Russian festival by the Russian Association of Theater Critics, according to ISNA. Along with 'Macbeth Zar,' other works from France, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Japan, Russia, and Georgia are scheduled to be performed. The Saint Petersburg Theater Festival has been a yearly occurrence since 2000 and is known for hosting fresh and original

productions. The play's concept is rooted in Zar, a religious rite that involves an individual, usually female, being possessed by a spirit. Zar is the term used to refer to a type of spirit, the malady they inflict when they descend upon a person, and the ceremony required to soothe the spirits and alleviate the patient's symptoms. The ceremony includes burning incense, playing music, and performing movement to appease the Zar, which will help relieve the afflicted person. The 'Macbeth Zar' play has previously won awards at the Moscow Nights Festival and Munich Theater Festival. Additionally, it has been staged at the Avignon Festival, GITIS International Institute of Russia, and other festivals in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and India.

Legacy of Aminollah Rashidi: A reflection on Iran's music

Arts & Culture Desk

Aminollah Rashidi is a celebrated singer and composer of Iranian music, considered a maestro and the last surviving crooner from the country's pioneering era of the 1950s and 1960s. At 98 years old, he remains active and engaged in his art, with an ample collection of songs still waiting to be unveiled. Nevertheless, neither orchestras nor radio and television networks support his artistic endeavors. Despite being a prominent figure in the music industry, Rashidi receives no acknowledgment from friends, colleagues, or officials, and has no financial support to bring his compositions to life. Rashidi's birthday on April 24 coincided with the anniversary of the launch of the first radio transmitter in Iran in 1940. This milestone marks 83 years of the nation's love for art and music, which evokes memories of classic radio programs and the emergence of renowned composers and vocalists like Hossein Qavami, Gholamhossein Banan, Mahmoud Mahmoudi Khansari, Rouhollah Khaleqi, Parviz Yahaqqi, and Morteza Mahjoubi. However, Rashidi bemoans that the radio, no longer possesses the same vibrant and lively character it once had. Most of his works in the last year or two were broadcasted on television, but recently, less attention has been paid to the works of past maestros and old masters. Even the national media seems to have overlooked these great artists, leading Rashidi to conclude that the era of music and literature has drawn to a close.

Need for support

Rashidi is still awaiting a singer and sponsor to bring his compositions to life, but neither orchestras nor financial backers seem to care about his work. Having lived through nearly a century of

the music world's ebbs and flows, Rashidi speaks passionately and optimistically about his beloved art form. Yet, he laments the lack of empathy and interest from certain friends, colleagues, and officials. On his birthday, he received no acknowledgement from anyone, despite being one of Iran's greatest and most distinguished contemporary poets, whose lyrics and melodies are widely renowned. He is still awaiting a singer and sponsor to bring his compositions to life, but neither orchestras nor financial backers seem to care about this issue. "It is a protracted odyssey to return to the bygone four decades, yet I endure and am renowned, a treasure to cherish. My works have not been confined to a receptacle and I would be thrilled for enthusiasts to read them." Furthermore, he remarks on the current state of Iranian music: "These days, works are conceived and enjoyed by society and friends, but not akin to the productions of the 1950s and 1960s. It appears that the tastes of friends are not in harmony with Persian music, and the epoch has reverted to a state where good and harmonious music is no longer extant. The times have changed and turned upside down. I must declare that there are scant performers who compose and sing songs based on the principles of instrumental music in recent years."

Still keen to sing

In 1946, the veteran singer migrated from central city of Kashan to the capital Tehran, where he enrolled at Roudaki Hall under the tutelage of Mousa Maroufi to hone his singing skills. Thereafter, he continued his education with Mehdi Forough at the Conservatory of Music, studying the theory of contemporary music and vocalization. "They were instrumental in

guiding me along this path." On May 10, 2018, Rashidi graced Tehran's Andisheh Hall with his presence as a guest singer, performing alongside the music band "Oshshaq" (lovers). Even at the age of 98, he remains enthusiastic and fervent about staging concerts, expressing, "Though conditions have changes and our work has waned, I am yet keen to perform for my fans. I implore the authorities to take heed of this matter, for our beloved Iran abounds with prodigious artists who need support." The stalwart singer of Persian music shares his aspirations, stating, "As with all admirers of Iran, patriots, literature aficionados, and music enthusiasts, I yearn for the headway and perpetuation of cultural and artistic pursuits within our nation, providing a platform for veteran artists to continue to shine."

