

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An Evening of Mesmerizing, Meditative Music Under the Stars

MDC Live Arts and Rhythm Foundation present Persian Musician & Cultural Treasure Sahba Motallebi

Miami, Jan. 4, 2018 – Miami Dade College’s (MDC) MDC Live Arts and Rhythm Foundation will co-present an evening of Persian classical music with Sahba Motallebi and Naghmeh Farahmand at 8 p.m., on Saturday, Jan. 27, at the North Beach Bandshell.

The stars—and initiatives—aligned for two of Miami’s premier presenting organizations to bring forth this rare event. MDC Live Arts, with *Ojala/Inshallah: Wishes from the Muslim World* season, is designed to explore the diversity of Muslim culture through the arts and challenge widespread assumptions concerning contemporary Muslim identity. The Rhythm Foundation’s *Axis of Love* series, injects positivity and empathy into the global conversation through presenting instrumental, traditional and innovative sounds from the conflict zones of the Middle East and Africa.

The collaboration launches with Persian classical musician Sahba Motallebi on Saturday, Jan 27 and continues with Iraqi trumpeter Amir ElSaffar on Saturday, March 3 and Moroccan trance group Innova Gnawa on Saturday, May 5. In an immersive environment. The audience surrounds performers in an in-the-round stage setup. The evening also features culture-specific traditional snacks and sweets to engage the audience in a multi-sensory experience.

Persian classical music is a deeply spiritual and contemplative art form central to Iranian identity. One of the world’s oldest and greatest musical traditions, it is built around melodic phrases organized into hundreds of pieces and 12 larger systems, which a master musician weaves into a larger improvisational performance. Such a master musician is Sahba Motallebi, who remains rooted in this ancient tradition, while incorporating Iranian folk and contemporary elements to create a musical experience that engages both the mind and the soul. She will be accompanied by Naghmeh Farahmand on *tonbak* (goblet drum) and *daf* (frame drum).

The two musicians will also participate in engagement activities at MDC’s Wolfson Campus, addressing Honors College students, with discussions about their backgrounds and cultural identities.

About Sahba Motallebi

Sahba Motallebi is a modern virtuoso of the *tar* and *setar*, lute-like stringed instruments central to Persian classical music. One of its few female soloists, she was named Best Tar Player at the Iranian Music Festival for four consecutive years. She began her studies at the Tehran Conservatory of Music at age 14, helped found the women’s music ensemble Chakaveh and later joined the Iranian National Orchestra, which launched her international career. She is now regarded as an ambassador of classical Persian music in the U.S.

About Naghmeh Farahmand

Naghmeh Farahmand is the daughter of Mahmoud, one of the leading percussion masters in Iran. She started playing the *tonbak* at age six under the supervision of her father, and was encouraged to learn a melodic instrument to gain insight into the melodic aspect of music, as this would make her a better accompanist. She began playing the *santur* under the guidance of Faramarz Payvar and Pashang Kamkar. Besides learning traditional music, Farahmand found the *daf* to be very powerful and spiritual and began learning Sufi and Kurdish rhythms from Bijan Kamkar and Masoud Habibi. She has performed in many well-known traditional ensembles in Iran and at festivals around the world. Farahmand has also performed with ney master Hassan Nahid and famed vocalist Hengameh Akhavan. In 2010, she moved to Canada and started working with musicians in world music and jazz. She is the founder of the Sharghi percussion ensemble.

WHAT: Sahba Motallebi accompanied by Naghmeh Farahmand

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 27, at 8 p.m.

WHERE: North Beach Bandshell
7275 Collins Ave Miami Beach FL 33141

>> [Click here](#) for photos

>> [Click here](#) for video

To purchase tickets, please visit <http://www.rhythmfoundation.com/> Tickets are \$20 advance/ \$25 day of show.

About MDC Live Arts

MDC Live Arts is Miami's most eclectic performing arts series. Created in 1990 as Cultura del Lobo, MDC Live Arts has a celebrated history of bringing extraordinary national and international performing artists to Miami. The annual series presents today's most exciting artists and designs meaningful engagement between these artists, the students of MDC, and the greater community. MDC Live Arts seeks artists from across the globe who push boundaries and honor traditions relevant to Miami's diverse community, and aims to offer audiences opportunities to discover new ideas, perspectives and forms of expression. For more information, please visit www.mdclivearts.org.

Ojalá/Inshallah: Wishes from The Muslim World is made possible by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program. **The Building Bridges Program** is the grant-making arm of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, which is an extension of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The program supports national efforts to advance relationships, increase understanding, and reduce bias between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The mission of DDFIA is to promote the study, understanding and appreciation of Muslim arts and cultures. For more information, please visit www.ddcf.org/what-we-fund/building-bridges.

The programs of MDC Live Arts are made possible with the generous support of: Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; the National Endowment for the Arts; and National Performance Network (NPN). MDC Live Arts is a Partner of the National Performance Network (NPN). Major NPN contributors include the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Amal is a National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by MDC Live Arts in partnership with Su Teatro, MACLA and NPN/VAN.

About The Rhythm Foundation

The Rhythm Foundation, a Miami Beach-based non-profit cultural organization, is a leading presenter of world music in the US. It was founded in 1988 with the goal of increasing international awareness through live music - concerts, events and festivals by established and innovative artists from around the world. Special focus is given to those cultures connecting to South Florida audiences – music from Brazil, Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and Europe. In 2015 the City of Miami Beach awarded management of the North Beach Bandshell to the Rhythm Foundation, who are now creating exciting year-round programming at this architectural gem. For more information, please visit RhythmFoundation.com.

Axis of Love is made possible with the support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge. The Knight Arts Challenge funds the best ideas for engaging and enriching communities through the arts. Victoria Rogers, Vice President of Arts for Knight Foundation, said: "Few things can bring people together like the arts. Events like this series are a great prism for exploring our and other cultures, and for finding the threads that unite us all."

The programs of The Rhythm Foundation are made possible with the generous support from the City of Miami Beach, the Department of Tourism and Cultural Development; the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; Miami Beach Mayor and City Commissioners; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board

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This and other MDC releases are available on the web at www.mdc.edu.

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