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**OLNEY THEATRE CENTER GOES BEHIND THE SCENES AND
BEYOND THE STAGE WITH COMMUNITY EVENTS INSPIRED BY
AVAAZ**

Olney, MD – February 14, 2024 – Olney Theatre Center announced an engaging line-up of Community Events inspired by its latest production, *Avaaz*. Director of Community Engagement, Shruthi Mukund says, “With *Avaaz*, we are curating events to highlight Persian culture, traditions, and stories to provide old and new members a way to engage with the theatre through arts and culture and learn about the similarities while celebrating the differences.” Olney Theatre Center offers the community a variety of interactive events hosted by prominent speakers, local artists, and cultural experts to dive deeper into the themes within a production.

Upcoming Community Events for *Avaaz* are as follows: an in-depth conversation with Iranian policy advisors and activists, storytelling with a Marvel comic artist and author, poetry readings accompanied by the Daf for Fal e Hafez, discussions of books written by Iranian-American authors, and a Persian dance workshop that teaches the Qashqai Wedding Dance.

Tickets for Community Events are low or no-cost to patrons but do vary. For more information visit olneytheatre.org/community

Avaaz, written and performed by Michael Shayan and directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel, runs March 6 - April 7, in Olney Theatre’s Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab. For information and tickets visit: olneytheatre.org/avaaz

EVENT DETAILS

BEHIND THE SCENES - Opening Night Conversation “Goodbye Tehran, Hello USA”

March 9, 2024

5:00 pm

Mulitz-Gudelsky Theatre Lab

\$10 / Free for members

Join guest speakers, Holly Dagres and Marjan Keypour (Greenblatt), for an opening night panel discussion facilitated by Artistic Director, Jason Loewith.

IN THE COMMUNITY - “Persian Traditions” Story Time at the Olney Library

March 3, 2024

2:00 pm

Olney Public Library

No RSVP. Just show up!

This free family event is appropriate for all ages, especially toddlers, preschoolers, and young children. Join us at the Olney Public Library for a morning of stories inspired by *Avaaz*. Books to be read are chosen with the help of the Olney librarian and feature special guest storyteller, author and artist, Arsia Rozegar.

BEYOND THE STAGE - Fal-e-Hafez with Kamyar Arsani

March 16, 2024

5:00 pm

William H. Graham Sr. Actors' Hall

Free

In the Persian tradition Fal-e-Hafez, whenever one faces a difficulty or a fork in the road, or even if one has a general question in mind, one would ask the Oracle of Shiraz Hafiz for guidance. Joined by Iranian multi-instrumentalist, singer and songwriter, Kamyar Arsani, this program focuses on an evening of prayer and reflection as followed by the book reading of Hafez Qazals. Coloring sheets are available for children in attendance.

BEYOND THE STAGE - Olney Theatre Book Club

March 19 and 26, 2024

6:00 pm

Omi's Pavilion

RSVP to attend the discussion.

Introducing Olney Theatre's Book Club with discussions of books related to our current season. Come talk with Olney Theatre Center's Artistic Staff and guest speakers on March 19 for *Cry of the Peacock* by Gina Nahai and on March 26 for *Prisoner: My 544 Days in an Iranian Prison—Solitary Confinement, a Sham Trial, High-Stakes Diplomacy, and the Extraordinary Efforts It Took to Get Me Out* by Jason Rezaian.

BEYOND THE STAGE - Persian Dance with Nomad Dancers

March 23, 2024

4:30 pm

William H. Graham Sr. Actors' Hall

\$10

In celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, Nomad Dancers will present a short program of dances from Iran and Afghanistan, followed by an opportunity to learn the Qashqai Wedding Dance led by Adriane Whalen (Artistic Director of Nomad Dancers). The Nomad Dancers are a

non-profit educational and cultural organization, dedicated to performing traditional dances from Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan and Central Asia.