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MEDIA CONTACT:

(310) 994-7930

news@bflybuzz.com



World Premiere of Niloufar Talebi's *Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels)* at Carnegie Hall

Tue, March 29, 2011 at 7:30pm (World Premiere)

Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall | 57th Street & 7th Ave | NYC

Tickets: \$42-50 at 212.247.7800 or www.carnegiehall.org

CARNEGIE HALL

Sun, April 3, 2011 at 3pm (West Coast Premiere)

Cal Performances | Hertz Hall | University of California, Berkeley

Tickets: \$48 at 510.642.9988 or www.calperfs.berkeley.edu

Cal Performances
music dance theater
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Music by Mark Grey

Featuring Soprano Jessica Rivera,

Pianist Molly Morkoski and the MEME Ensemble

Los Angeles, February 22, 2011 – Butterfly Buzz announced today the world premiere of ***Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels)***, a libretto written by writer, theater artist, and award-winning translator, **Niloufar Talebi**, at [Carnegie Hall in New York on March 29, 2011](#), and the West Coast premiere at [Cal Performances in Berkeley on April 3, 2011](#).

Co-commissioned by [Carnegie Hall](#), [Cal Performances](#), and [Meet the Composer](#), ***Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels)*** tells a story that builds bridges to greater understanding and invites reflection on a decade following September 11, 2001 – an event which ultimately inspired the creation of this work. The music for ***Ātash Sorushān*** is written by [Mark Grey](#), and the soprano [Jessica Rivera](#) performs the piece. Conductor [Donato Cabrera](#) leads premiere performances.

[Click here](#) to view [Niloufar Talebi and Jessica Rivera rehearse *Ātash Sorushān \(Fire Angels\)*](#).

“At its heart, ***Ātash Sorushān*** is a story about love and connection,” states Talebi. “My hope is that it will leave us wondering how a devastating event between two dominant forces can become a ground zero for love.”

Ātash Sorushān draws upon various cultural elements, weaving ancient traditions of the East into modern and universal concerns of the present day. ‘Ātash’ is the Persian word for fire, an element essential to both destruction and renovation. In the Zoroastrian religion, ‘Sorush’ is a messenger angel, who presides over the beginning and end of the world, fighting against demons that threaten to extinguish the world's fire.

While ***Ātash Sorushān*** at Carnegie Hall will mark Talebi's debut at the prestigious venue, the visionary artist is no stranger to high profile stages.



As the founding director of [The Translation Project](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting Iran-inspired projects, Talebi premiered [The Persian Rite of Spring](#) to a sold out Bing Theater at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art \(LACMA\)](#) in March 2010.

Commissioned by the [Farhang Foundation](#), [The Persian Rite of Spring](#), written and performed by Talebi, brings to life the mythology, poetry, music, and folklore of Nowruz (new year), observed by millions, including Iranians, around the world. The birth of light and its victory over dark is celebrated by ceremonies, from *Yalda* (Winter Solstice) through *13-Bedar* (Outdoor-13), that usher in the renewal of the world each spring.

On **March 12, 2011**, [the newly-released DVD of The Persian Rite of Spring](#) will screen at the Samueli Theater at [Segerstrom Center for the Arts](#) (previously called the Orange County Performing Arts Center) in honor of Iranian New Year; a FREE program sponsored by [Farhang Foundation](#).

For more information on the artist and her works, please visit www.NiloufarTalebi.com.

About Niloufar Talebi

Writer, theater artist, and award-winning translator, Niloufar Talebi was born in London to Iranian parents. She is the editor/translator of *BELONGING: New Poetry by Iranians Around the World* (North Atlantic Books, 2008), and the creator/performer of multimedia projects, *Four Springs* (2004), *Midnight Approaches* (2006), *ICARUS/RISE* (2007), *The Persian Rite of Spring* (2010). She is the founding director of The Translation Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting Iran-inspired projects. She is the author of *Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels)*. For more info visit: www.niloufartalebi.com

Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels) is a story about love and connection. It tells the tale of two larger-than-life beings, Mana and Ahsha, that dwell in separate realms, each convinced of their supreme power. In an all out collision, as their outward and mighty facades crumble, a transcendent final movement begins with the realization that in our moments of vulnerability, we are one. How can a devastating event between two dominant forces become a Ground Zero for love? How can we better understand our fellow human beings?

Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels) draws upon various cultural elements, weaving ancient traditions of the East into modern and universal concerns of the present day. Mana is the Oceanic and Persian term for the divine life force that embodies everything, and Ahsha is an Avestan term for truth/existence in Zoroastrian theology. Fire, considered an agent of truth, is the physical domain of Ahsha, the divine archangel. While Mana and Ahsha are not personified in their traditions, Niloufar Talebi re-imagined them as characters by marrying their philosophical concepts with human characteristics. In the title, "Atash" is the Persian word for fire, essential for the destruction and renewal of Mana, Ahsha, and all they represent, while "Sorushan" is the plural form of "Sorush" (in the singular, the proper name of a messenger angel, like Gabriel, who presides over the beginning and end of the world and who fights the daemons threatening to extinguish the world's fire/passion/truth). *Ātash Sorushān (Fire Angels)*, refers to the role both Mana and Ahsha played out, angels with a message of purification and peace, ending a world and beginning a new one. Mana and Ahsha begin under the assumption of difference, and through the power of transformation, end by realizing their sameness. By humanizing them, each with their own equally magnificent strengths and weaknesses, this piece explore the grey areas of history in the reflection of our past decade.