

BOOK OF KINGS AT CHESLEA & WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL

An afternoon of Persian poetry, music, and reflection

On Wednesday 9th November, staff, patients and families visiting Chelsea and Westminster Hospital will experience an afternoon of Persian poetry and music with two shows marking the launch of a new children's book, **Zal and the Phoenix**. The event is sponsored by the British-Iranian entrepreneur and philanthropist Reza Beyad and is being hosted by CW+, the official charity of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, as part of its award-winning Arts for All programme.

Zal and The Phoenix is an adaptation of a tale from the 1000 year-old epic poem **The Shahnameh – Book of Kings**, by Iran's most celebrated poet **Ferdowsi**.

The Shahnameh is one of the world's longest and most epic poems; comprising more than 50,000 rhyming couplets that weave together myth and history, with stories of kings and queens, heroes and heroines, demons, and magical creatures. Rich with stories, this event at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital will focus on a parable of an abandoned child, discriminated because of the colour of his skin and hair - a thousand-year-old story of discrimination, acceptance, friendship, and forgiveness. The child is rescued by a magical Phoenix.

The publication of the e-book www.zalanthephoenix.com will coincide with the event.

The live shows will be narrated by British-Iranian siblings, **Kourosh** and **Shanley Sarmadi** (both of whom were born at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital), along with their father **Hadi Sarmadi**. Complementing the narration, which has been adapted by renowned music director **Mark Stephenson**, evocative Persian music by cousins **Adib Rostami** (tombak) and **Mehdi Rostami** (setar), will accompany the narration, which is often the tradition of oral storytelling.

Artists **Annabel Sebag-Monterflore** and **Cristina Martin** have magnificently illustrated this scene, which will be on display through LED.

Ends. /

For more information

If you have any questions, please get in touch with:

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Notes to Editors

1. Mark Stephenson is the author of the story adaptation, music director of the Oscar-winning *Peter & The Wolf* stop-frame model animation film, and he conducted the soundtrack recording of Sergei Prokofiev's original score with the Philharmonic Orchestra.
2. Annabel Sebag-Montefiore is the artist of the painted illustrations, which will be displayed on an LED screen.
3. Cristina Martin, highly commended at the Macmillan Children's Book Prize, is the artist of the line illustrations, which will be displayed on an LED screen.
4. Reza Beyad is deeply committed to public service and the voluntary sector and has maintained an unwavering commitment to supporting the most vulnerable through his charity programmes. He works for mainly children's charities and has a passionate belief in the "healing powers of robust compassion". One of his main interests is to engage in constructive inter-faith dialogues and help build bridges between different faiths and communities. His own faith underpins his efforts to create a more caring, just, and inclusive society. For all of this and more, he was awarded the "Freedom of the City of London" in 2014.