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FARNAZ OHADI

w/ MASHREGH ENSEMBLE

Presents...

BIRD DANCE TOUR

The national premiere of Canada's only Persian flamenco singer

Mar 9 / 10 | Tirgan Nourouz Festival | Toronto, ON

Mar 13 | Shenkman Arts Centre | Ottawa, ON

Mar 14 | La Sala Rosa | Montreal, QC

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"Ohadi beautifully merges her Iranian culture with her interest in Spanish music."

~ The Province

TORONTO – Tehran-born and now Vancouver-based artist **FARNAZ OHADI** along w/ **MASHREGH ENSEMBLE**, present the debut, **Canadian Folk Award-nominated album *BIRD DANCE***, outside of British Columbia for the first time. The tour marks the national arrival of a powerful and original new voice, as Ohadi deftly combines two disparate musical influences to tell a profoundly personal story of conflict, immigration,

resilience, and ultimately, creative fulfillment. Dates include the **Tirgan Nourouz Festival** (a celebration of Persian New Year and of Persian-Canadian culture), in Toronto on March 9th and 10th, the **Shenkman Arts Centre** in Ottawa, March 13th, and **La Sala Rosa** in Montreal on March 14th. The Persian/Flamenco album, recorded in 432 Hertz frequency, was released in October, 2016, and is available now on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, Apple music & CD Baby. For more information please

visit www.farnazohadi.com

FB Event page: <https://www.facebook.com/tours/613731339040597/>

With the **Bird Dance Tour**, **Farnaz Ohadi** arrives on the national scene with a spellbinding story to tell, and a proud new voice with which to tell it.

"I'm not chasing anyone," says Ohadi. "There is the path of flamenco music and the path of Persian music, and now there is another path – the path of Bird Dance."

For Ohadi, flamenco has always been a part of life. She grew up listening to her father's flamenco cassettes in their Tehran apartment, and though she also sang traditional Persian music in school choirs, something about the rawness of flamenco called to her. At 13, a family trip to Spain cemented Ohadi's obsession, and she arrived in Canada five years later, with the spirit of flamenco already coursing through her veins. That marked the beginning of what would be a lifelong journey for Ohadi, from Iran to Canada, oppression to freedom, and from creative doubt to complete authenticity. Along the way, Ohadi would invent an entirely new musical genre: **Persian flamenco**. A genre steeped in the history of two ancient cultures.

"It feels like freedom," says Farnaz. "You can be totally wild. You can cry onstage and it's okay."

With a strong urge to find her own voice, follow her passion for flamenco, and to speak to the women of Iran – *"The album is extremely personal," says Ohadi. "Yet it is also the story of every Iranian woman, and in many ways, of every immigrant"* – she began singing flamenco in Farsi with Persian-influenced melodies. The staccato nature of flamenco proved difficult to pair with melodic Farsi, an almost accent-free language. Ohadi worked enthusiastically, mining centuries of Persian poetry to find the verses that matched flamenco's defining rhythms, while narrating her story.

That story, contained in her debut album **Bird Dance**, began with her at 12 years old, listening to her father's flamenco albums and gazing out the window at the birds that danced across the evening sky. For the young Ohadi, life in Iran was a cage. Watching the birds, she longed to be free.

The title track tells the story of a musical girl born in a country that prohibits women from singing solo in public or before male audiences. It recounts Ohadi's sense of feeling larger than life, and longing to be free of her cage. **"Hesar"** details Ohadi's feelings of alienation and loneliness that so often accompany an immigrant's arrival in a new country. The final leg of the journey emerges in **"Vatan,"** which reveals an artist who has found her voice and is ready to help heal the suffering of her homeland with the joy of music.

Ohadi and **Mashregh Ensemble** – an evolving cast of international world musicians including Seville-based flamenco guitarist **Dennis Duffin**, Cuban percussionist **Hanser Santos Gomez**, Montreal-based *santur* virtuoso **Amir Amiri**, Vancouver bassist **Michael Rush** and acclaimed flamenco dance powerhouse **Carmen Romero** – seamlessly weave the defining rhythms and intensity of flamenco with the subtle

cadence of poetic lyrics in Ohadi's native Farsi. Complex instrumentation from both Spanish and Persian traditions blend to create a sound that is at once invigorating and profoundly soothing.

Bird Dance will be performed in Montreal and Ottawa plus twice in Toronto, at the Tirgan Nourouz Festival. Since Toronto has a burgeoning Iranian community, Ohadi sees the Toronto performances as her first major opportunity to share her message with the Canadian-Persian community, and to speak directly to its women.

Ohadi asserts, "I want to show that you can be a Persian woman who is resilient, wild, and free, and you can be authentic, use your voice in strength, and still be part of Iranian culture."

THE MUSICIANS:

Farnaz Ohadi – vocals
Dennis Duffin – flamenco guitar
Amir Amiri – *santur*
Michael Rush – double bass
Hanser Santos Gómez – percussion
Carmen Romero – flamenco dance

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For more information, photos, mp3s, WAV files, interviews, please contact:

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