

Farokhzad Layegh

COMPOSER / STANDARD BIOGRAPHY / 273 WORDS

Farokhzad Layegh (b. 1963, Shiraz) is an Iranian composer and senior interventional cardiologist. His music brings Persian musical heritage into dialogue with contemporary Western composition, literature and interdisciplinary performance. His musical and medical careers have developed alongside one another, through distinct forms of inquiry.

He began studying violin at seven. After setting music aside to pursue medicine following the 1979 Revolution, he returned to musical study in Paris with setar player Reza Ghassemi. He subsequently continued his study of Persian music with Massoud Shaari, drawing on the perspectives of Hossein Alizadeh and Dariush Talai.

The Book of Austerity (2007), recorded with Shahram Nazari, brings contemporary Persian poetry into dialogue with a re-interpretation of Persian musical traditions. Sus-Septed Tempus (2012) extends this exploration into a seven-movement cycle for string quartet. It was performed at Cadogan Hall in 2020 through INTERNAVA, the initiative Layegh co-founded with conductor Mark Stephenson. String-orchestra arrangements received their Dutch premiere with Amsterdam Sinfonietta at Muziekgebouw Amsterdam; subsequent presentations included film and Walldance.

Completed in 2021 and released by Hermes Records, Lexolalia Descenticum explores an imagined encounter between T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land and the voice of Ahmad Shamlou. It became a musical point of departure for The Waste Land / Het barre land, developed by Amsterdam Sinfonietta and ISH Dance Collective. Premiered in the Netherlands in 2022, the production returned for a national tour and its Asian premiere at the Hong Kong Arts Festival in 2025.

Layegh performs the setar parts in The Book of Austerity and cello parts in Sus-Septed Tempus and Lexolalia Descenticum. His artistic outlook draws on literature, philosophy, science and the visual and performing arts.