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**PERSIAN ARTS FESTIVAL REVIVES SHAB-E SHE'R
POETRY NIGHT AT BOWERY POETRY CLUB**

NEW YORK, November 12, 2007 -- Wednesday, December 19, 2007 Persian Arts Festival (PAF) marks the revival of Shab-e She'r, A Night of (Persian) Poetry, at the Bowery Poetry Club (BPC). The program will continue every third Wednesday of the month through May 2008. PAF's first featured reader is well known Iranian-American novelist and memoirist, Nahid Rachlin, reading from her recent memoir, *Persian Girls*. An open mic follows Rachlin's reading, inviting everyone to read either his or her own poetry or works by other poets, in Persian or English, though we ask that the work connects to Iran or Iranian/Persian culture. Poet, essayist, translator and PAF Literary Arts Director, Richard Jeffrey Newman, hosts the December launch of Shab-e She'r. To sign up for the open mic email richard@persianartsfestival.org. Shab-e She'r at the Bowery Poetry Club will run from 6-8 PM every third Wednesday of the month. \$12 cover includes one drink. BPC is located at 308 Bowery @ Bleecker in NYC. Please visit PAF online for more information at www.persianartsfestival.org.

A long-standing and well-loved tradition, BPC's original Shab-e She'r brought together poets, scholars, and other members of the Iranian community in the New York metropolitan area to celebrate their shared literary heritage. Poets, young and old, would read their own work, in Persian and in English; others would recite, and sometimes sing, poems by Rumi, Sa'di, Hafez and more; issues were discussed and debated. The evening, in other words, provided a place in New York City where the living literary tradition of Iran could lay down roots and flourish. When the original Shab-e She'r was discontinued, it left a gap in the cultural life of New York that has not been filled until now. In keeping with its mission to "highlight the magnificence and diversity of Persian art and culture," PAF has decided to fill that gap, allowing the voice of Persian literature to join once more the chorus of voices that is New York's poetry and literary scene.

Nahid Rachlin has written four novels, one collection of short stories and, most recently, *Persian Girls*, a memoir. Her short stories have been widely anthologized and have appeared in publications as varied as *Redbook* and *Prairie Schooner*. Ms. Rachlin has made her career examining, in exquisite emotional detail and with great compassion, the immigrant Iranian experience in all its myriad forms. Of *Persian Girls*, which was selected as one of *The Best Books of 2006* for NPR by Christopher Merrill, Director of Iowa International Writing program, who has written: "If you want to know what it was like to grow up in Iran this is the book to read."

PAF Literary Arts Director, Richard Jeffrey Newman is a poet, essayist and translator. The author of *The Silence Of Men* (CavanKerry Press, 2006), a book of his own poetry, and two books of translations from classical Persian literature, *Selections from Saadi's Gulistan* and *Selections from Saadi's Bustan* (both from Global Scholarly Publications, 2004 and 2006 respectively), he is currently translating selections from the *Shahnameh*, the Persian national epic. He collaborated with Professor John Moyne on a forthcoming Rumi anthology, *A Bird in the Garden of Angels* (Mazda Publishers). In addition to serving as PAF Literary Arts Director, Richard Jeffrey Newman sits on the advisory board of The Translation Project, is a speaker with the New York Council for the Humanities and Associate Professor at Nassau Community College, where he also leads its Creative Writing Project.

ABOUT PERSIAN ARTS FESTIVAL

Persian Arts Festival, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to showcasing the magnificence and diversity of Persian art and culture through its voices, artists and visionaries. PAF provides a truly unique opportunity for local and global communities to gather and explore one of the world's most ancient and rich civilizations. Persian Arts Festival is a sponsored project of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA). More information at www.persianartsfestival.org.