

MEDIENDOSSIER TRIGON-FILM

# **THE LEGEND OF LOVE**

**(Afsaneh-e eshgh)**

**von Farhad MEHRANFAR**

**Iran/Kurdistan 2000**

## **VERLEIH**

trigon-film  
Limmatauweg 9  
5408 Ennetbaden  
Tel: 056 430 12 30  
Fax: 056 430 12 31  
info@trigon-film.org  
www.trigon-film.org

## **MEDIENKONTAKT**

Tel: 056 430 12 35  
Fax: 056 430 12 31  
medien@trigon-film.org

## **BILDMATERIAL**

www.trigon-film.org

## AUSZEICHNUNGEN

Special Jury Award, Santa Barbara Film Festival, 2001

Special Festival Price, Wine Country Film Festival, CA, USA 2001

## MITWIRKENDE

Regie	Farhad Mehranfar
Drehbuch	Farhad Mehranfar, Mohammed Rezaee Rad
Kamera	Nader Masoomi
Montage	Shahrzad Pooya
Ton	Farrokh Fadaee
Kostüme	Soheila Farzad Hashemi
Musik	Ali Kohan Deiry
Produzent	Mohammad-Reza Sarhangi
Produktion	Cima Media International, Tehran, Iran
Sprache	Kurdische OV mit Untertiteln d/f
Format	35 mm
Länge	83 Minuten

## DARSTELLENDEN

Maryam Moqadam

Yusef Moradian

Hawass Palouk

## FARHAD MEHRANFAR

Farhad Mehranfar wurde 1959 in Bandar Anzali im Iran geboren. Er wuchs im Norden des Landes auf und absolvierte seine Studien am Iranian College of Art. Während Jahren arbeitete er als Dokumentarist, drehte über zwanzig Dokumentarfilme und zahlreiche Kurzfilme. *The Legend of Love* ist sein dritter Spielfilm nach *Paper Airplanes* (1997) und *The Three of Life* (1998), die an verschiedenen internationalen Filmfestivals ausgezeichnet wurden.

## INTERVIEW MIT DEM REGISSEUR

*«Collective Human Feelings»*

*Interview with Farhad Mehranfar Director of «The Legend of Love»  
by Nazanin Farahani*

*In: Film International, Summer 2000, Vol. 8, No. 4*

Farhad Mehranfar, a graduate of the Cinema College, has already made some 30 documentaries and three feature films, «Paper Airplane», «Tree of Life», and «Legend of Love». In all his films, he has been concerned with Iranian national culture, thus attempting to unearth and revive what is unknown about this culture. Though his films have never been publicly screened in Iran, many critics and festivals have praised them. Mehranfar says, "Any filmmaker's prime concern is to firstly address and relate to his own nation".

*You have directed quality films, but they have not been screened in Iran yet. Why is it so?*

There are several reasons. First, the number of films made in Iran is much higher than the number that could be screened in film theaters. As such, not all films can be screened. Second, there is an unjust system for film release and distribution that monopolizes the film theaters and whose policy is to screen commercial films that appeal to the public. Third, films like mine are branded as intellectual movies. This is an adverse publicity by those segments of the press that are affiliated with commercial cinema. These are the reasons why my films have not been screened. Even Mr. Kiarostami's films are screened because of his international credits. One can make a long list of prestigious Iranian filmmakers whose films have not been adequately screened over the past twenty years.

*Given all these setbacks, would you want to adopt a different style? Or is it that you do not care about the national market?*

Every filmmaker's prime concern is to firstly address and relate to his own people. Anyway, despite the situation of these films at home, they have been screened at international festivals for the general audiences. «Trees of Life» has been screened in five Latin American countries and Spain. «Paper Airplane» was screened in France. Many TV networks have also screened these films. This proves that the films have attracted the general audiences in other countries. As such, it is not correct to call these films merely intellectual movies. I told Nicolas Sarquis of Mar Del Plata Film Festival, who distributed my film in five Latin American countries, "It is surprising that my film is accepted by people in a country that is culturally different with Iran." Sarquis said, "This is a Latin American film." That is to say, the general audiences in Latin American easily understand it. As such, the claim that I do not make films for the masses of people is unfounded.

*You mean when you choose a subject from Iran's native culture, it attracts the masses of people in other countries whose cultures are largely different from*

*ours, say France? And that this proves the film will appeal to Iran's general viewers as well?*

Yes. Surely, nations share commonalities. France is not a different world that could not understand the Third World human feelings. I met many viewers, some common people, in the festivals and noticed that they naturally associated with the film.

*Apparently «Legend of Love» is more appealing to general audiences than your other two feature films.*

Definitely. In this film, we address a more general audience. We had a special screening of the film at the Urama Studies Congress. We faced a totally different reaction from the audience in Kurdistan. Some 1,600 people showed up, while the screening hall accommodated only 800. Moreover, they came there without any publicity at all and gave enthusiastic ovation to the film. At present, Kurdistan is obviously ready to watch «Legend of Love».

*You tried to further approach the general audiences.*

«Legend of Love» is one of the few national films respecting the Kurdish people and culture. Most films made in Kurdistan have just used the place as a setting without paying much attention to the Kurdish feelings, culture, and needs. But «Legend of Love» not only addresses the general audiences in Kurdistan but also respects the Kurdish culture. I was obsessed with this film for twenty years. As such, it can be of interest to an idealistic generation that has sustained mortal blows in political, emotional, and idealistic challenges over the past twenty years. I did not strive to make a film that would drive a wedge between me and my fellow countrymen or that would be appealing to the festivals only. Anyway «Legend of Love» proves the falsity of such claims.

*There are many problems in urban life, but filmmakers tend to overlook these. Will you someday take up urban subjects?*

Many of the 60 films that are annually produced in Iran deal with urban, familial, social, and other problems. Rarely does a film deal fundamentally with the discovery and stabilization of ethnic cultures that would ultimately give shape to the national culture. I believe that a part of cinema activities should be geared in this direction. I view cinema as a means of research, and not as a commercial or professional field. I think we need films of this sort, which would also provide groundwork for commercial films to use these locations and cultural features. If I can keep on making films I want to work on films that would somehow serve as a cultural encyclopedia of Iran. Only in this way would I be able to achieve something worthy.

*Following the festival success of some Iranian films set in Kurdistan, many young directors have turned to this area. Would this be a possible abuse of Kurdistan by people who have no knowledge of Kurdish culture and who only wish to make a gain at festivals?*

I was a student during the revolution. That is, I belong to an idealistic generation that viewed Kurdistan as a symbolic geography. For a generation that sought its identity, Kurdistan was a powerful spiritual and cultural region for whose identity and independence my generation was extremely concerned. For us, as students then, Kurdistan was an epic land. We followed the challenges that surfaced in those days. So I internalized everything very slowly and expressed them in «Legend of Love» twenty years later. Even though «The Blackboards», «A Time for the Drunken Horses», and «Legend of Love» have all been made in Kurdistan, they are completely different and belong to three fully separate ecologies. And this indicates the value of our author cinema. Kurdistan is a large land to be explored through hundreds of documentaries and feature films. Many films have, of course, been made in Kurdistan, but they have actually made commercial or political use of the region. They have presented a distorted and superficial image of Kurdistan, its violence, cliffs, weapons, and people. But I have endeavored to show the real image of Kurds.

*What role do festivals and success of Iranian filmmakers play in the development of filmmaking in Iran?*

The first lessons a filmmaker gets from a festival is that he becomes aware of his own cinema skills. That is to say, he gets to know his own strengths and weaknesses. The international presentations of Iranian films has been one of the most important means giving credit to the Iranian culture. Of course, a filmmaker's success in festivals has some dangers that we should be able to forestall. If we can well depict the feeling of a female rice cropper, we will be able to present a crystal-clear image of all female rice croppers in the world. When one shows something collectively shared, one elicits and appeals to common feelings that people all over the globe have.