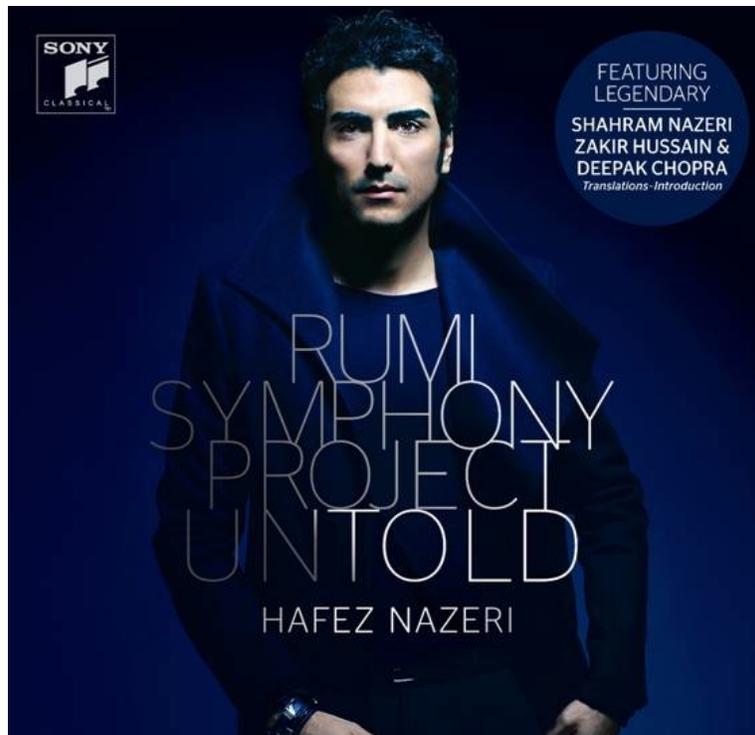


**SONY CLASSICAL PRESENTS MAJOR LABEL DEBUT FROM IRANIAN
COMPOSER HAFEZ NAZERI**

NAZERI'S *UNTOLD* SET FOR MARCH 11 RELEASE

FEATURING TRANSLATIONS BY DEEPAK CHOPRA

CO-PRODUCED BY DAVID FROST (ANDREA BOCELLI, YO-YO MA)
INVOLVING 38 GRAMMY WINNING MUSICIANS AND ENGINEERS



Sony Classical has announced a March 11th release for *UNTOLD*, the much-anticipated major label debut from acclaimed Iranian composer, vocalist, and virtuoso instrumentalist, Hafez Nazeri. An innovative synthesis of Middle Eastern and Western elements, *UNTOLD* introduces Nazeri as one of modern music's most exciting new voices.

Co-produced by Nazeri and David Frost (Andrea Bocelli, Yo-Yo Ma), *Untold* celebrates the work of legendary 13th century Persian poet Rumi and his eternal message of peace, light and

love. This magnum opus features 38 Grammy winning musicians and engineers and took over four years and 5,000 hours in the studio to complete.

Untold is the first cycle of Hafez's ongoing project, the Rumi Symphony Project, which is joined on this recording by a glittering array of guest artists: tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, Grammy winning drummer Glen Velez, cellists Matt Haimovitz and Johannes Moser, and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center violist Paul Neubauer. One of the album's many highlights is the vocals of Hafez Nazeri's father, iconic Persian vocalist Shahram Nazeri (named the "Pavarotti of Iran" by the New York Times), whom was the first musician to incorporate Rumi's poetry into song some forty years ago. *Untold* features the poetry of Rumi transcribed in its liner notes by best-selling author Deepak Chopra.

In both the instrumental and vocal passages, the listener can hear elements of East and West amalgamated into a single entity, creating a rich texture that sounds like nothing else. At the core of each of Nazeri's compositions is the presence of Rumi, whom in the words of Deepak Chopra, "delivers the divine mystery to us with passion."

"Hafez has done an extraordinary job bringing his spiritual intelligence, the longing that we find in the poems of Rumi and the modern understanding of cosmology and evolution," says Deepak Chopra. "He's brought it all together into a single symphonic orchestra composition."

With Iran's top luthiers, Hafez also designed a modernized version of the traditional setar, which he introduces for the first time in *Untold*. Broadening the instrument's neck and adding two lower strings to enhance its harmonic and melodic range by 17 chromatic pitches are just some of the advancements made in order to transform the ancient setar into an instrument capable of performance in an ensemble. This new instrument is called the Hafez - named, as is its designer, after the ancient Persian poet Hafez.

"This album has been an extremely challenging project, to say the least," says Hafez. "I wanted to forge a unique and enduring new direction in music that will bridge all of our divisions and unify us. A lofty goal, I know, but one that's driven me for the past decade. I traveled the world to record with the players that I wanted. Individual pieces became so complex and genre-defying that even the virtuoso musicians that I was fortunate enough to work with found it challenging at times. I, too, occasionally struggled to play or sing what I had envisioned and created. The process resulted in a significant change in the general approach to composition thanks to the balance *Untold* presents between East and West. I have also invented a new vocal style as well as a new technique for a string instrument that I am showcasing in this release. All of these details compliment the album's main theme, which is change."

For Hafez, the goal of change extends beyond music-making. After years of political conflict, *Untold* arrives at a time when tensions between Iran and the West appear to be softening. Hafez hopes his music and art can call attention to the rich contributions of Persian civilization in world culture.

"When all that we hear about Iran is filtered through headlines of intolerance, it's more important than ever to shine a light on the country's 7,000-year-old cultural history with its deeply poetic and artistic mystical tradition. I'd be honored to have my music help spark a new conversation." says Hafez.

"I think this music has the capacity to totally transform our consciousness, literally cause a mutation in our consciousness and as that shifts everything shifts: the way we think, the way we behave, the way we speak to each other and the way we interact with the world." adds Deepak Chopra.

Hafez will be promoting the album with a North American tour that kicks off March 8th at Roy

Thomson Hall in Toronto. Dates are as follows:

March 8	Toronto	Roy Thomson Hall
March 9	Montreal	Place des Arts
March 14	Dallas	Eisemann Center
March 23	San Jose, CA	Flint Center
March 29	Los Angeles	Nokia Theatre
April 5	Washington	Warner Theatre
April 13	Chicago	Copernicus
April 19	Atlanta	Ferst Center
April 20	Houston	Cullen Hall
April 26	Vancouver	Orpheum Theatre

ABOUT HAFEZ NAZERI

Hafez Nazeri is Iran's most influential and innovative new composer and vocalist. The son of legendary musician Shahram Nazeri, Hafez started his training at age two and has been performing alongside his father at music festivals in Europe and the Middle East since the age of nine. With a diploma in composition and conducting from the Mannes School of Music in New York, Hafez is also a virtuoso on several traditional Persian instruments. He has extended the technique of playing the setar and devised a new version of the instrument called the hafez. Hafez Nazeri is the founder of the highly acclaimed Rumi Ensemble, a record-breaking sensation in the history of the Middle East. In 2005, having played to nearly 140,000 wildly enthusiastic fans in Iran, Hafez toured the Rumi Ensemble in the U.S. along with his father. His sold-out performances have filled Carnegie Hall in New York, Royal Albert Hall in London, Disney Hall in Los Angeles and other major venues around the world. In 2007 Hafez expanded the Rumi Ensemble to create the Rumi Symphony Project, the entity for which *Untold* has been written. As Hafez has mounted one major production after another in the U.S., he has attracted the attention of increasing numbers of important print, web and broadcast media, creating a steadily

building appreciation for his music and ideas. He has been interviewed and/or reviewed by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Diego Tribune*, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *CNN*, *Fox News*, *BBC World Service*, *ABC*, *NPR* and many more.

Hafez has made his home in New York City, with occasional visits to Tehran.

www.hafeznazeri.com

The Tehran-born Hafez began playing music at age 3 and by age 9 had embarked on many years of performing and touring alongside his father, adding priceless musical education to his regular schooling. By the time he was a teenager he had appeared at music festivals throughout Europe and the Middle East, and at 21 he assembled a group of talented young players to form a group he called the Rumi Ensemble. Hafez wrote innovative music for this ensemble which immediately spoke to a younger audience than traditional Persian music, and the group became wildly popular in Iran. Select compositions from the Rumi Ensemble tour were also performed by other orchestras at concerts and festivals in Sweden, Belgium, France, Morocco and the U.K.

Shortly after the success of the Rumi Ensemble, Hafez sought to extend his musical education to the Western classical tradition, and moved to New York City. In 2005 he achieved his goal, earning a diploma in Composition and Conducting from the Mannes College of Music. Upon

graduation Hafez added new members to the Rumi Ensemble and launched *In the Path of Rumi*, a highly successful tour of major venues in North America which served to establish Hafez as an important new voice to the Middle Eastern ex-patriot communities in the U.S. The tour also introduced Hafez to a much broader audience, which led to invitations to lecture at Emory University and Harvard, where he was recognized for his creative innovations in Persian music. In 2007 Hafez prepared his most ambitious project to date for the celebration of the 800th birthday of his muse, the poet Rumi: The Rumi Symphony. The Rumi Symphony performed a concert called *Iranian Sounds of Peace* at Disney Concert Hall and at Carnegie Hall to critical acclaim. Hafez and The Rumi Symphony then recorded *The Passion of Rumi*, a CD which reached “Best of” lists in publications on both coasts.

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