



Wellesley College

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Ms Farzaneh Joorabchi, an exceptionally talented musician and singer from Iran, who recently visited Wellesley College and gave a number of exquisite performances for the general public and for the campus community. A particular highlight of Ms Joorabchi's visit was a session in which she attended one of my undergraduate classes. My students, who were studying Iranian history and culture, were delighted by her performance in our class and learnt a great deal from her outstanding presentation.

Ms Joorabchi has a broad range of talents and was extremely generous in sharing her skills and expertise with my students. She is trained not only in the Persian classical musical tradition (*radif*) but also in several folk musical idioms, and she emphasises the broader role of music in Iranian culture with its multiple interconnections with poetry, dance, art and architecture, and especially philosophy and mysticism. She began her session with a performance on the *daf*, or Kurdish drum, thus introducing my students to a distinctive musical style and its social and religious context. Next she delivered a powerful and evocative recitation, in Persian, of quatrains by Omar Khayyam, which she then wove into a brilliant improvisatory performance in which she both sang and played the Persian stringed instrument, the *setar*. My students were delighted by the beauty of the music and poetry, which we were privileged to experience in the relatively intimate space of the classroom.

Additionally, Ms Joorabchi is very knowledgeable about many Iranian artistic traditions. She possesses a large and beautiful collection of slides of Iranian architecture, ranging from the magnificent pre-Islamic palace complex of Persepolis to the many stunning architectural monuments of Isfahan, including public areas, mosques, bridges, palaces, and Armenian churches. Ms Joorabchi also showed my students an extremely interesting DVD, which explored depictions of angels in Persian art, from pre-Islamic times to the present. In every case, Ms Joorabchi emphasized with great effectiveness the interconnectedness of the visual, poetic and musical arts in Iranian culture.

Overall, Ms Joorabchi's visit constituted an outstanding, and rare, opportunity for my students and for me. Ms Joorabchi is a superbly trained and gifted musician and artist who is also exceptionally skilled in presenting Persian music in its broader cultural

context. I hope very much indeed that she will be able to return to Wellesley College and to other educational and artistic institutions in America in the near future, for she offers us an extraordinary opportunity for deepening our knowledge and understanding of her country and its culture.

Yours sincerely,



Louise Marlow

Director of Middle Eastern Studies