NEW 4K RESTORATION

BASHU

THE LITTLE STRANGER

A FILM BY **BAHRAM BEYZAIE**

"A VITAL CINEMATIC MASTERPIECE." —JAFAR PANAHI



SYNOPSIS

Voted “the greatest Iranian film of all time” by Persian film magazine Picture House, writer/ director Bahram Beyzaie’s BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER is a deeply humanist and poetic tale of empathy and compassion. With studied realism and lyrical artistry, the film resonates as a prophetic parable of life during wartime.

During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, a young boy named Bashu loses his family in a bombing raid on their home in Southern Iran. He escapes on a cargo truck headed to Northern Iran where he finds refuge with a farmer, Naii, and her two children. Despite the differences in their respective language and culture, the two form an indelible bond as they must face new challenges from Naii's tight-knit community.

Hailed as a “vital cinematic masterpiece” by director Jafar Panahi, BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER is presented in a new 4K restoration by Roashana Studios with the support of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.



NOTE FROM DIRECTOR BAHRAM BEYZAIE

"It is now exactly forty years since the filming of this work took place in both the north and the south of Iran.

At that time, any word that did not glorify the war was met with threats and was strictly forbidden. But was it also forbidden to give refuge to a migrant child fleeing that war?

Today, with the utmost humility, I pay tribute to all the innocent victims of that senseless eight-year conflict, and I call down a curse upon all profiteers of every war."

Bahram Beyzaie, September 2025

TALK ABOUT “BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER”

“Maestro Bahram Beyzaie is not only a filmmaker in the Iranian tradition. He is a writer, a scholar, and an artist who has made an unrivaled contribution in reviving the legends, stories, and mythology of Greater Iran and the Persianate world.

[BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER] narrates the story of a little boy struck by war, who takes refuge in another region. Throughout his journey, the story of coexistence and acceptance of The Other takes form. It carries a message that was not only relevant to the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, but is also vital for our world today: a world that is still full of resentment, displacement, and violence, where instead of dialogue and understanding, war mongers and those hungry for power keep adding fuel to the fire of prejudice and ignorance.

For many years, this film was banned from screening in Iran, simply because it was a work of art that was honest, humanistic, and anti-war; in the same way that Beyzaie himself was pushed into exile instead of being allowed to create art in his own country. Such is the common fate of all artists faced with regimes that not only have no appreciation for the arts, but are intrinsically against art and against culture. Nevertheless, exile could not silence Beyzaie. His work continues to reveal the truth and keep our collective cultural memory alive.

The screening of this restored copy of BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER not only pays tribute to a cinematic masterpiece; it is also a reminder that art at any time, in any place, awakens human consciousness and shows us humane paths through friendship, coexistence, and peace.”

Jafar Panahi, September 2025

“The encounter of human differences, within a thoroughly Iranian story and told with a universal expression, is exactly what Bahram Beyzaie brings us face to face with in BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER.

Even today, nearly forty years after the film was made, its universal expression remains striking. For an Iranian audience, the meeting of two characters with different languages, skin colors, and cultures – one from the lush, mountainous north of Iran and the other from the hot, arid southwest – is a deeply local narrative. Yet this very story, infused with the mysteries of Iranian culture, creates a universal and powerful concept of cultural diversity and the authenticity of human relationships, and – against the backdrop of war – lays bare the futility of all violence.

At a time when, under the heavy hand of censorship, women in Iranian cinema were either absent or portrayed as passive, the film’s heroine is a beautiful woman (brought to life in a

brilliant performance by Susan Taslimi) who, as a compassionate yet strong-willed mother, rejects discrimination and violence.

The film was made in the midst of the bloody war between Iran and its western neighbor, Iraq – a time when filmmakers were called upon, as an Islamic duty, to produce part of the government's propaganda content to justify and prolong the war. Films were meant to stir the emotions of audiences and lead them into a senseless battle in which, on both sides, combatants shouted 'Allahu Akbar' as they pointed the way to paradise.

Yet Beyzaie, with great effort and keen intelligence, made the film he wanted to make, though it remained banned for many years.

Now, four decades later, with Bashu having become an unforgettable character in Iranian cinema, one can see more clearly than ever how Beyzaie transforms the cinema screen into a window carved from the history and literature of Iran, opening it onto a beautiful and spectacular world."

Mohammad Rasoulof, August 2025

"Bahram Beyzaie is rightfully by the greatest playwright in the history of Iran and remains forever one of the most important filmmakers who, with the films he has made, holds a great place in Iranian cinema, both before the Revolution and after the Revolution. Especially this extraordinary film of his, BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER, which is a product of filmmaking by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and contains a message that is everlasting.

The style of the film and its way of storytelling are extraordinary, and it is fitting to say that the cinematography of this film is the work of one of the greatest cinematographers in the history of Iranian cinema… Firuz Malekzadeh.

And how happy I am that this film is going to be screened in the Classics section of the Venice International Festival 2025.

Because maybe this will be a way for this important work of Iranian cinema to find its way into the cinemas of various countries. I hope so… why not?..

Cut…"

Amir Naderi, August 2025

“*BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER is not merely a film for me; it is an image etched into the memory of my childhood. In those days when the sky over my city was filled with the wail of sirens and the thud of bombs, I sat in the darkness of a small cinema, watching a boy escape from the heart of war to another land. Bashu, with his unfamiliar accent and his presence so foreign to that place, felt at once known and distant to me – much like myself, a child growing up between fear and dreams. Perhaps it was there, without my knowing, that the seed of my dream to become a filmmaker was planted – a dream that, years later, would lead me behind the camera to tell my own stories.*

In this film, Bahram Beyzaie told not only the story of a small refugee, but our own story: the story of displacement, the search for a home, and the meaning of friendship. His gaze upon war, upon women, upon the land and its languages, became for our generation – raised in smoke and rubble – a lesson in humanity and compassion.

Years have passed, yet each time I return to Bashu, I feel that Beyzaie is not merely a director, but a teacher who has reminded us, through images, that a homeland is not only the place where we are born. A homeland is where someone takes your hand and says: stay.”

Shahram Mokri, August 2025



MORE ABOUT ‘BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER’

"Simple and quietly effective."
The New York Times

"A pure joy in which there are absolutely no false moves."

Los Angeles Times

"A masterpiece."
Les Cahiers du Cinéma

A landmark of Iranian cinema and a deeply humanist work, ***BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER*** blends realism with the quiet lyricism of a modern fable. Produced in 1985 with the support of Kanoon (the Iranian state institute that also backed Abbas Kiarostami’s early films), the film stands as a sincere and enduring plea for tolerance, and a subtle critique of rigid social norms. In 1999, it was voted *“the greatest Iranian film of all time”* by a panel of 150 critics and professionals.



BAHRAM BEYZAIE - BIOGRAPHY

Bahram Beyzaie is a celebrated Iranian director, playwright, and screenwriter, renowned for his poetic storytelling and deep engagement with Persian history and mythology. A leading figure in Iran's New Wave cinema, his acclaimed cinematographic work notably includes *Downpour* and*, BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER*. Also a scholar of traditional Iranian theatre, Bahram Beyzaie has received numerous international accolades and continues to inspire audiences worldwide through his films, plays, and academic contributions.

BAHRAM BEYZAIE - FILMOGRAPHY

1970 – *Amoo Sibilou (Uncle Moustache)* (short)

1972 – *Ragbar (Downpour)*

1972 – *Safar (Journey)* (short)

1974 – *Gharibeh va Meh (The Stranger and the Fog)*

1978 – *Kalaagh (The Crow)*

1980 – *Cherikeye Tara (Ballad of Tara)*

1981 – *Marge Yazdgerd (Death of Yazdgerd)*

1985 – *Bashu, Gharibeh Kouchak (Bashu, the Little Stranger)*

1988 – *Shayad Vaghti Digar (Maybe Some Other Time)*

1992 – *Mosaferan (Travellers)*

1998 – *Goftegoo Ba Bad (Kish Stories)* (short)

2001 – *Sag Koshi (Killing Rabbids)*

2006 – *Ghaliye Sokhangoo (The Eloquent Carpet)* (short)

2009 – *Vaghti Hameh Khabim (When We Are All Asleep)*

CAST

Naii	**Susan Taslimi**
Bashu	**Adnan Afravian**
Naii's husband	**Parviz Pourhosseini**
Marhamat	**Akbar Doodkar**
Marhamat's son	**Hamid Rahbar**

CREW

Written by	**Bahram Beyzaie**
Directed by	**Bahram Beyzaie**
Producer	**Alireza Zarrin**
Director of Photography	**Firouz Malakzadeh**
Sound	**Jahangir Mirshekari**, **Asghar Shahverdi**, **Behrouz Moavenian**
Editing	**Bahram Beyzaie**
Costume Designer	**Bahram Beyzaie, Iraj Raminfar**
Production	**Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adult (Kanoon)**
International sales	**mk2 Films**

BASHU, THE LITTLE STRANGER
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ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Founded in 2002, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. It has released more than 300 feature films culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide including the Oscar-nominated films *Theeb* (2016) and *Corpus Christi* (2020). Film Movement's theatrical releases include American independent films, documentaries, and foreign-language arthouse titles. Its catalog includes works by directors such as Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Lee Isaac Chung, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Ciro Guerra, Bertrand Bonello and Mélanie Laurent.

In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on digital platforms, Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Ang Lee, Chen Kaige, Luchino Visconti, Stanley Kwan, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, King Hu, Lee Chang Dong, Hideo Gosha and Sergio Corbucci.

For more information, please visit: **www.filmmovement.com**



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