

Can you introduce us to the four main actors of the film?

Hassan Majnooni and Pantea Panahiha are two great stage actors whose careers I have followed closely over the years. The collaboration with them was a very happy one. They helped me a lot on set, with many aspects of directing, not only working with actors.

Rayan Sarlak, who was 6 at the time of filming, had starred in a blockbuster TV series that I hadn't seen. When I started my research, everyone told me to watch it. From our first meeting, I knew he would be the perfect younger brother. He had a very professional attitude on set and a taste for work which I found fascinating, given his age. Even though directing him took a lot of energy, I really enjoyed working with him.

Amin Simiar, the big brother studies drama. I first chose him based on a photo and when I met him I was immediately convinced. The synergy between the four of them worked very well and I took immense pleasure in leading them.

Can you introduce us to your cinematographer, Amin Jafari, and tell us how you worked with him?

I met Amin Jafari on the set of THREE FACES, my father's film. We quickly became friends and I immediately thought of him for the cinematography on HIT THE ROAD. But he did more than that. He was a true big brother for me, even a therapist who, on set, knew how to calm my nerves, help me find solutions, facilitate my decision-making, discuss framing choices. I am very grateful to him for this generous collaboration.

In some shots, not so much the ones in the car, but rather the wide shots where you see a path, one seems to feel the influence of Kiarostami. Did he inspire you?

It has become quite difficult to shoot a wide shot from a car in Iran without drawing a comparison to Kiarostami's work. These kind of comparisons always seem to always arise with Iranian filmmakers, whereas elsewhere in the world, young directors can shoot without constantly being compared to more senior directors, or to being accused of plagiarism. Despite all my attachment to Kiarostami's cinema, I find this comparison too easy.

How did the editing with Ashkan Mehri and Amir Etminan work?

Amir Etminan was present with me on the set. At night, after we finished filming, we would work on the rough cut of the film. Then, back in Tehran, I was able to work with Ashkan Mehri in a more focused way to polish the editing. They were both very valuable, as we discussed the sequence of shots and the structure of the film.

Shall we discuss the songs heard in the movie? Are they popular songs in Iran? Are they tolerated by the regime?

These songs are hits that we all grew up with in Iran. They date from before the revolution and I find it very painful to see the disastrous development of pop, if not all of Iranian music, in recent decades. I jumped at the chance to choose these pieces which resonate beautifully with the