



[Iranian soprano, Darya Dadvar delivered a beautiful Ave Maria in Princess Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari funeral.](#)

Soraya's Death

Princess Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari continued her life in Paris and spent her summers at her Villa Maryam (named after her grandmother) in Marbella, Spain. She moved in the high society circles and spent her time with a select few friends. The sad end came at 2 PM Thursday 25th of October 2001. She was only 69. Her maid found her dead on the floor of her bedroom in her apartment at 46 Ave Montaign. Apparently a massive brain hemorrhage was the cause of Princess Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari death.



The service at the American Church in Paris, a close walking distance from Soraya's apartment was arranged for the 7th of November 2001 and her brother Bijan along with other family members and Paris dignitaries were to attend the services. Bijan, aided by a companion, traveled by car from Koln a few days earlier. Sadly while staying at Hotel George V in Paris, Bijan died suddenly before he could attend the funeral of his sister.

With Princess Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari's brother Bijan in later years

On the day of the service, "Cathedrale Americaine de la Sainte Trinite" in Avenue George V filled up with approximately 400 friends, family and dignitaries including Count of Paris Henri d'Orleans, Prince Gholam Reza Pahlavi and his wife, Beatrix de Hohenlohe, Rixa de Oldenburg, Anne de Bourbon, some members of the Bakhtiari family and her friends. Outside the Cathedral, a large crowd of camera teams and photographers from all over the world had gathered looking for prominent faces. The memorial service began at 3 PM when the coffin was brought in draped in blue silk and adorned with a single rose carried by 6 pallbearers.

Canon Sharon Gracen gave the sermon. During her sermon, she recited some of Rumi's writings; she was followed by some kind words and remembrance by the ex-ambassador of France to Iran, Francis Dore, followed by Alexandre de Villiers who had once been commissioned by Queen Farah to write a book about Iran and the Imperial family. A distinguished former cabinet minister of Iran, Dr. Majid Majidi spoke on behalf of the Iranian exiles in France and expressed his condolences to the Bakhtiari family for their loss.

Iranian soprano, Darya Dadvar delivered a beautiful Ava Maria by Franz Schubert to the music of the organist in Princess Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari funeral.

The body was taken to Germany on Friday 16th of November and buried in her family tomb in the cemetery of Westfriedhof, Munich.

As a young girl, Soraya had pictures of some movie stars framed, in addition to a photo of the young Shah. She would tell all her friends and cousins that one day she will either become an actress or marry the king. Both aspirations became realities but none brought her lasting happiness.