

AVAZ International Dance Theatre was founded in 1977 by artistic director Dr. Anthony Shay. AVAZ is a non-profit corporation whose mission is to perform and preserve the traditional dances and music of Central Asia, Middle East, and Eastern Europe. AVAZ's unique artistic vision has set a new standard for the creation of traditional, classical, and contemporary dances and costumes of these regions, which has earned the company wide critical acclaim for its excellence. The LA Times praised artistic directors Shay and Jamal for their "intimate knowledge of antique Persian classicism" and for offering "an immersion in Persian Culture; Avaz International Troupe ignores normal boundaries and creates a true adventure."

**Anthony Shay**, a recipient of the James Irvine Fellowship in Dance, has over forty years of performing and creative experience in staging and choreographing dances and music from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. After years of study in Iran, Dr. Shay created the Aman Folk Ensemble in 1963 and served as artistic director until 1977. Shay received commendations from President Clinton and the LA City Council for excellence in choreography in 1995.



**Mohammad Nejad**, the AVAZ Musical Director, is a master of Iranian classical music. He demonstrates this through his unique capacity to play all the major musical instruments, coupled with a deep knowledge of historical and regional folk music. He completed his formal education in an intensive program sponsored by the Fine Arts Ministry of Iran.



**Company Artists:** Kelly Ann Anthony, Scott Cain, Abigail Caro, Jose Diaz-Caamal, Nadia Diaz-Caamal, Mary Esther Espinoza, Enrique Gonzalez, Guadalupe Gonzalez, Melonie Grasty-Vazquez, Brandy Maya Healy, Jamal, Cay Lundy, Joy Martin, Craig Merriweather, Edgar Miramontes, Mastaneh Moghaddam, Mohammad Nejad, Karen Ochoa, Victor Ortega, Lori Parker and Andre Prospero

**Costuming and Lighting:** Jamal

We thank the following generous supporters: Bonita and Sherwin Edelberg (Central Asian Suite), Ahmanson Foundation, Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, Pary and Ahmad Azad (Iranian Tribal Suite), and the NEA (Caucasian Suite). We are indebted to the California Arts Council for their continued support.



The Persian Student Association was founded in 1994 as an organization to promote Persian culture, and heritage at Stanford and beyond. Recent events that we have sponsored include lectures on Persian culture, history, and literature, lectures by distinguished Iranian professionals, recitals of classical Persian music by renowned artists, and an Iranian cinema series at Bechtel International Center.



Stanford Persian Student Association  
and Persian Center present



**AVAZ**

INTERNATIONAL DANCE THEATRE

## *Dances and Music of the Silk Road*

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS:

**ANTHONY SHAY**

**JAMAL**

MUSICAL DIRECTOR:

**MOHAMMAD NEJAD**

**Stanford University**

Dinkelspiel Auditorium

Sunday April 4, 1999, 4:00-7:00 PM

AVAZ SPRING 1999 U.S. TOUR

MARCH 4 - SANTA MONICA CITY COLLEGE, SANTA MONICA

MARCH 6 - UCLA HAMMER MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

MARCH 7 - WILSHIRE EBELL THEATRE, LOS ANGELES

MARCH 13 - UCI BARCLAY THEATRE, IRVINE

MARCH 28 - QUEENS COLLEGE, COLDEN CENTER, NY

## PART I

### Central Asian Suite

*Mahtab* – Karen Ochoa, soloist

*Usul-e Daireh* – Mohammad Nejad, Jamal, and Craig Merriweather

*Katta Uyin*

### Folk Music

Mohammad Nejad and Craig Merriweather, musicians

### Iranian Tribal Suite

*Bojnurd* – Dance of Khorasan

*Torbat Jam* – Dance of Khorasan

*Dasbandi* – Dance of Baluchistan: Jamal, Kelly Ann Anthony, soloists

*Bandari* – Dance of the Persian Gulf: Lori Parker and Karen Ochoa, soloists

*Chuz Bazi and Chupi* – Qashqa’l dances

————— *Intermission* —————

## PART II

### Caucasian Suite

*Gliding Dance*

*Canopy Dance*

*Armenian Classical Dance* – Brandy Maya Healy, soloist

*Line Dance, Yalli*

### Classical Music

Mohammad Nejad and Craig Merriweather, musicians

### Iranian Classical Dance

*Gol-ha* (flowers) – Brandy Maya Healy, Cay Lundy, Karen Ochoa, Lori Parker

### Urban Music

*Dastgah of Shur* – Mohammad Nejad and Craig Merriweather, musicians

Anthony Shay, vocalist

### Urban Dance of Tehran

*Shateri* – Lori Parker and Karen Ochoa, soloists

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Central Asian Suite

For centuries the peoples of Central Asia, both those who speak variants of Persian known as Tajik, and the Uzbek Turkic speakers, have maintained the ancient dance and music traditions of the Iranian world. This suite represents a collection of classical dances, *Mahtab* and *Katta Uyin* from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the ancient cities of Bukhara and Samarqand. The dynamic movements of this tradition reflect a melding of the refined Iranian urban traditions and the military steppe traditions of the Mongols and Turks that formed the court of the Timurids. The *daireh*, a frame drum found throughout the Iranian world, provides the rhythmic background for music and dance in the northern tier of the vast region.

### Folk Music

Folk songs from a variety of regions display the rich and colorful regional music traditions of Iran. Many folk melodies were incorporated into the classical Persian music tradition.

### Iranian Tribal Suite

The tribes that inhabit the entire periphery of Iran present a colorful mosaic of costumes, music and dances accompanied by the clatter of jewelry, the beat of pounding feet or the clash of sticks and staves. Common to all of them are men’s dances which incorporate the martial arts movements, whirling, and turning that reflect the centuries’ long practices of the movements from the various mystical (Sufi) orders found throughout Iran.

### Caucasian Suite

The Caucasian area, a shatter belt of ethnicity, is dominated by the Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and Georgians who share a movement vocabulary that reflects the long cultural and political association with the Iranian world. Like most areas of the Iranian world, many Caucasian cities and towns are famous for the production of luxury textiles.

### Iranian Classical Dance

Professional dancers in the cities of the Iranian world have been depicted in numerous art works from as early as 2500 BC. The dancers were masters of improvisation and from at least the sixteenth century belonged to family-based professionals known as *motreb*, who also sang, played music, acted, and performed acrobatics. These dancers form an epic of the highly developed dance tradition of the Qajar (1795-1925) era.

### Urban Dance of Tehran

*Shateri* is a classicized choreography combining movements of both *jaheli* and *shateri*, two styles of men’s dances from the working classes. Like jazz, its origins began in the lower strata of society, but it has been popular among all classes. Women in the *anderun* (women’s quarters) donned men’s clothing and performed its hypermasculine movements.