

Nimrooz March 2008

An interview with Nima Kian in connection with the art of Ballet



Nima Kian professor of ballet and the founder of the Iranian ballet group presented some of his artistic creations including: land of turquoise, Mawlana Mawlana , woman and dances based on Persian folklore stories in London. Nimrooz has organized a short interview with the artist to discuss the art of ballet and his career in dance.

Toos Foundation presented its third program in Logan Hall on 9th March 2008, in London. This program was based on the 3000 year history of dance in Iran, covering various periods including:

- Mithraism.
- Achaemenid Empire.

- The influence of the art and culture of Mongols and Arabs on Iran.
- Banning of dancing in Islam
- Sufism and the whirling dance of the dervishes.
- Qajar dynasty.
- Pahlavi dynasty and the influence of the Western and particularly

European culture in Iran and the establishment of Iranian Ballet.

Tribute and Thanks to the young artist and ballet choreographer Nima Kian who has created the followings:

- Land of turquoise.
- Sufi, Mawlānā, Mawlānā
- Women and historical social cruelty and injustice.
- Simā Jun- inspired by Persian folklore stories and depicts with symbolic images of peace and togetherness with the use of vivid colours, traditional music, and expressionistic choreography

Toos Foundation programs use modernism and traditionalism to represent aspects of Iranian art and history. The aim is for the young generation of Iranians outside Iran to be reminded of their homeland heritage, roots and values. The general idea is not so much to promote the Persian art and culture, but to

remember and pay tributes to contemporary and classical Persian artists, making an effort to remind the World not to recognize the Iranian only by connection to crimes and terrorism but to appreciate the heartfelt wish for world peace and harmony of the Iranian people.

Q- Ballet is a western art. How did it come to Iran, attracting attentions?

A -Those who studied outside Iran turned out to be interested in ballet and introduced it to the Iranians. You need to know what is involved for a ballet to appear on the stage. Large groups of people must work together in organising it including: choreographers, dancers, musicians, lighting and sound specialists, costume designers, stage designers and very often a stage with unique specification are required. However, this can only be provided at a great cost, so this is only possible with the financial support and investments of the sponsors; in fact, without their support the art of ballet is doomed to extinction. Most countries have a national institute for ballet and in Iran, we are grateful for the Ministry of Arts and

Culture that supported the flourishing art of ballet.

Q –How do you relate Iranian stories with the art of ballet?

A–The dance music is chosen by either a choreographer or another institution depending on the political, humanitarian, and moralistic issues of the time. Then the choreographer writes the ballet the same way that a composer writes the music and the conductor controls the harmony and orchestration, the choreographer’s job is to design and harmonize the dance movements according to the music to be expressive of the story. The ballet can consist of several acts for groups or solo dancers and attention to the Iranian stories would dictate the dance movements and the number of acts.

Q –Are Iranian tales from the *Shahnameh* or *Manteq al-Tayr* suitable for ballet?

A–Yes, there are many potentials and that was the reason for starting the Iranian Ballet Company after the completion of my education.

Q–Do you think that Iranian ballet would remain at the same standard as before the revolution or will it achieve to a higher level.

A-That depends on the cultural policies of the country. I have no comments on that respect.

Q – As a teacher of ballet, how did you decide to choose this art when in Iran apart from Madam Yelena who trained a few students there is very little interest in dance let alone ballet?

A-I saw ballet on television for the first time during my childhood and became very interested in it. I used to collect books and post cards on ballet, during that time the cultural policies of the country allowed art and ballet to flourish it was a recognized art among Iranians inside and outside the country. In my capacity as the head of the Iranian ballet company, if I could relay messages of love and peace to the rest of the world through the harmonized movements with music of my ballets, then I have achieved my ultimate goal and no doubt, this would only be possible with your help and support.