

SAGHI: THE DANCE OF THE WINE BEARER
A RECONSTRUCTION/REIMAGINATION BASED ON THE CONCEPT
OF THE PERSIAN TIME ARTS TRIO

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Abstract

This project has two goals: first, I have attempted to re-imagine and reconstruct aspects of a lost classical Persian dance tradition by investigating an important part of that tradition, the mystical figure Saghi, the wine-bearer, as she appears in classical Persian literature, music, art, and calligraphy.

Second, I have created a new dance work using that research as a foundation and inspiration. In what follows, I refer to the overall continuing project as the **Saghi Project**; the dance work part of that project is called *Meeting with Saghi*.

Over the centuries, Persian, and specifically Sufi, poetry and music have developed in parallel so that together they reflect and embody mystical beliefs. My project is to create a dance style and movement vocabulary that emerge from and are linked to that poetry and music, reflecting the same mystical beliefs but in another artistic medium. This reconstruction is the *Meeting with Saghi*.

I include in my submission a DVD recording of *Meeting with Saghi*, a 50-minute dance work, as a tangible outcome of my research and creation. This choreography illustrates the vocabulary and structures of a style of dance that is at once new and traditional—a practice that might perhaps have existed for centuries had the connection between music, poetry, and dance (what I will discuss as the Persian Time Arts Trio) not been lost. Through research, experimentation, and teaching, I have tried to restore the integrity of that trio, showing in my dance the artistic and spiritual linkages of these arts.

Acknowledgments

This project would have not been possible without the contribution of all those masterminds and divine spirits who have promoted truth and love through their poetry and arts within the image of wine and the wine bearer. I would like to acknowledge the inspiration I have received through the rich artistic traditions and artists from the Caucasus Mountains to Iran to Central Asia, in particular the mystical geniuses who, through the poetry, have contributed to the image of Saghi.

I would like to thank all my students, especially my students in Frankfurt, for inspiring me to create my first dance work based on Saghi and for performing this choreography ever so beautifully with great joy and dedication. I also want to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of my four beautiful dancers, my first Saghi's, Natalie King, Ivana Matovina, Shirin Yousefi, and Heather Ball, who stood by me in completing this project in and out of studios.

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