

## *Artistic Statement*

My creation is a hint in the process of embracing the unity of mind, body, emotion, and spiritual being. Working in the tradition of dance, my work has been an attempt to share with others the ideas, experiences, and emotions I have witnessed within my own cultural identity and history.

My mission is to encourage the use of dance as an effective artistic tool to raise global awareness starting from our communities. I work to preserve and promote dance through research, exploration, education and new creations. My base for most of my artistic work emerges from traditional, ritualistic, and contemporary perspectives, exploring dance styles of the Near Eastern and Central Asian regions. These experiences have been enriched by many valuable successful experiences I have had in my extensive ethnographic field work both in traditional and popular cultural contexts.

It has been as absolute delight to connect with the dance community in Winnipeg. The Centre piece of tonight's performance is ANAR, a chapter of my full evening work called Choreographies of Migration inspired by my personal journey of placements and displacements. Through the rest of the who I have attempts to introduce to you my approach and my dance language. Hope you will enjoy the visit.

Founded in 1993, **Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre** is a professional Toronto-based dance company with both traditional and contemporary repertoire. The company produces an annual performance series, tours internationally and offers residencies, lecture-demonstrations, and classes in Near Eastern and Central Asian dance character, technique and choreography. Based on its eclectic repertoire, the company has enjoyed intensive touring across the Near East, Europe and North America for the past four years. This company's mission is to encourage the use of dance as an effective artistic tool to raise global awareness and work to preserve and promote dance through research, exploration, education and new creations of traditional, ritualistic, and contemporary perspectives, exploring dance styles of the Near Eastern and Central Asian regions. The company works to foster *the art of dance in a professional environment whereby creativity, experimentation, and knowledge may flow naturally.*

## **PROGRAMME**

“My creation is a hint in the process of embracing the unity of mind, body, emotion, and spiritual being. Working in the tradition of dance, my work has been an attempt to share with others the ideas, experiences, and emotions I have witnessed within my own cultural identity and history.”

*Sashar Zarif, Artistic Director*

### **Cry of Leyla**

...the walls of Sadoqkhaneh, the walk-in closet of my grandmother and her hand drum, hold many stories, which builds the very base of my character, the gossip and more ...and there is something about being part of those faded yet still-alive whispers of my childhood - birth, detachment, and death and birth again - that shades my life up until now, all the way to the end ...

### **Najva (midnight prayer)**

I cleanse my heart, in the stream of lights, flowing from wide open windows. And how full my prayer is with the moon, with clouds, with colourful rainbows. But yet you can see the rocks, the sea and the stones through the soul of my dance

### **ANAR**

The solitary cell is dark and cold, full of untold stories, shadowing the innocence of a virgin, vandalized by cruelty of darkness... (dedicated to the memory of my beloved cousin Azarmidokht)

### **LIFE IS THE FEELING OF A MIGRATING BIRD**

A disconnected sense of fulfilment, the search for heaven, a place I can call home, decorated with all my memories, good and bad, nasty and pleasant

## **PROGRAMME**

love affairs of my past for the future — this evening's program is a collection of distinct yet connected love affairs from my past, searching for a future. A deep whisper connected me to the in *Cry of Leyla*, the fire in Fargana's voice inspired my *Najva*, *ANAR* was Embraced by the generosity of four wise souls: D-Anne Cuby, Natasha Torres-Garner, and Odette Heyn-Penner, and *Life Is The Feeling Of A Migrating Bird* found its place on stage through excerpts from my journey in my dance and my life, and Stephani's care presence.

**Artistic Director** — Sashar Zarif  
**Choreography and Concept** — Sashar Zarif

**Music**  
Sashar Zarif- Cry of Leyla  
Fargana Qasimova - Najva  
Alizadeh, Hamidi, Jahangiri, and Sashar Zarif  
Dance Ethnology Archive-Turkmen Sahra 2004 - ANAR  
Sashar Zarif – Life .....

### **Performers**

Odette Heyn-Penner, D-Anne Cuby, Natasha Torres-Garner, and Sashar Zarif

**Costume Design** - Sashar Zarif

**Technical Director/Stage Manager** - Fjola Sprague-Cole

**Production Coordinator** - Stephanie Ballard

### ***Special Thanks:***

To my mother, for saving all my letters, for being here with me now, for a life-long inspiration, strength, survival, and love. Lots of love and One thousand and one thanks to my creative collaborators Carol Anderson, Katherine Duncanson, Terrill Maguire, And Holly Small (Original Cast -ANAR) and D-Anne Cuby, Natasha Torres-Garner, and Odette Heyn-Penner (Winnipeg Cast -ANAR) without whom I could never get the courage and magic to tell my stories. Dance Manitoba, School of Contemporary Dancers, and Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the mongolian wrestler, my grandmothers drum, and the spirits of the ones not with us any more. Debra Zoerb for her friendship, support, and generosity. My heart felt gratitude to Stephanie Ballard and the ones here tonight and out there to come. Sashar Zarif. MA/York 2006, PhD Cand./MiddleSex, UK

**Sashar Zarif** is an internationally renowned multi-disciplinary artist, educator, and researcher in the field of dance ethnology and ethno musicology. He is a faculty member at York University Dance Department. His areas of interest are identity, globalization and cross-cultural collaborations. His research, artistic practice and education activities are based on the arts of Central and Western Asia including Azerbaijan, Persia/Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Chechnya. Sashar has collaborated with such renowned artists as Alim Quasimov and Rizwan-Muazzam Qawwali as well as many esteemed colleagues at York University. He performs nationally and internationally with his company, Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre, and is the recipient of many awards including the New Pioneers Award Arts Award - artistic ambassador for diversity in arts; and a 2008 Dora Mavor Moore nomination for outstanding performance in his dance creation, *Choreographies of Migration*.

**D-Anne Kuby Trépanier** is a graduate of the Professional Program of SCD. She has been working in dance since 1978 including 12 years dancing with Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers. After an 18 year performing career she retired from the stage in 1996. Her work in dance since then has involved teaching, rehearsal directing, video production and arts administration. She currently resides in Winnipeg where most of her dancing is done in the privacy of her living room.

**Odette Heyn-Penner** has co-directed the Professional Program of The School of Contemporary Dancers for many years. She has been among the prime trainers of most members of Winnipeg's contemporary dance community and many artists now dancing nationally. Ms. Heyn-Penner continues to perform as an independent with numerous choreographers including Rachel Browne, Brent Lott and Stephanie Ballard, including the *Older and Reckless Festival 2009* in Toronto. She has also choreographed work for various performances including a tour with The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the *Festival of Canadian Modern Dance*, the *Kuan Du Arts Festival* in Taipei, Taiwan. Ms. Heyn-Penner has served as a Company Teacher for Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers for many years. Previously, she was Founding Artistic

Director of Sundance Children's Dance Theatre, created with the assistance of a Canada Council Explorations Grant. She has received several grant awards and has served as a juror and assessor for the Manitoba Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. She is currently a member of the board of the Alliance for Arts Education. She is a graduate of the Professional Program of SCD.

**Natasha Torres-Garner** graduated from the Senior Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers in 2002. She then commenced a 6 year position as a company dancer for Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers under the artistic direction of Tom Stroud, then Brent Lott. Simultaneously Natasha was working independently with Trip Dance Company, Fortier Danse Creation, Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, and Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie. For the past 4 years, Natasha has also been pursuing her interest in choreography. Throughout her choreographic experience, she has received mentorship from senior artists Rachel Browne, Davida Monk, Tom Stroud, Serge Benneton and Karen Kuzak. Her work has been shown with the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, for the Junior Professional Program of the School of Contemporary Dancers, at the House of Dance Series of Dance Horizons in Regina, Saskatchewan, in Dresden, Germany in collaboration with Shot AG, and in numerous Young Lungs Dance Exchange productions. She is presently developing her last solo work titled *REAL*, presented at the Cre8ery Gallery, in April 2009.

**Stephanie Ballard** is an acclaimed choreographer, personal coach and dance educator. She is a graduate of the Senior Professional Program of SCD and continues her affiliation with SCD as Artist / Residence / Archivist. Her most recent work, "A Christmas Carol" was a tremendous success and will become an annual event at the Gas Station Theatre. As Director of the Winnipeg Dance Preservation Initiative she has spearheaded numerous projects to recognize dance as essential to the human condition.

### **For Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre**

Artistic Director — Sashar Zarif

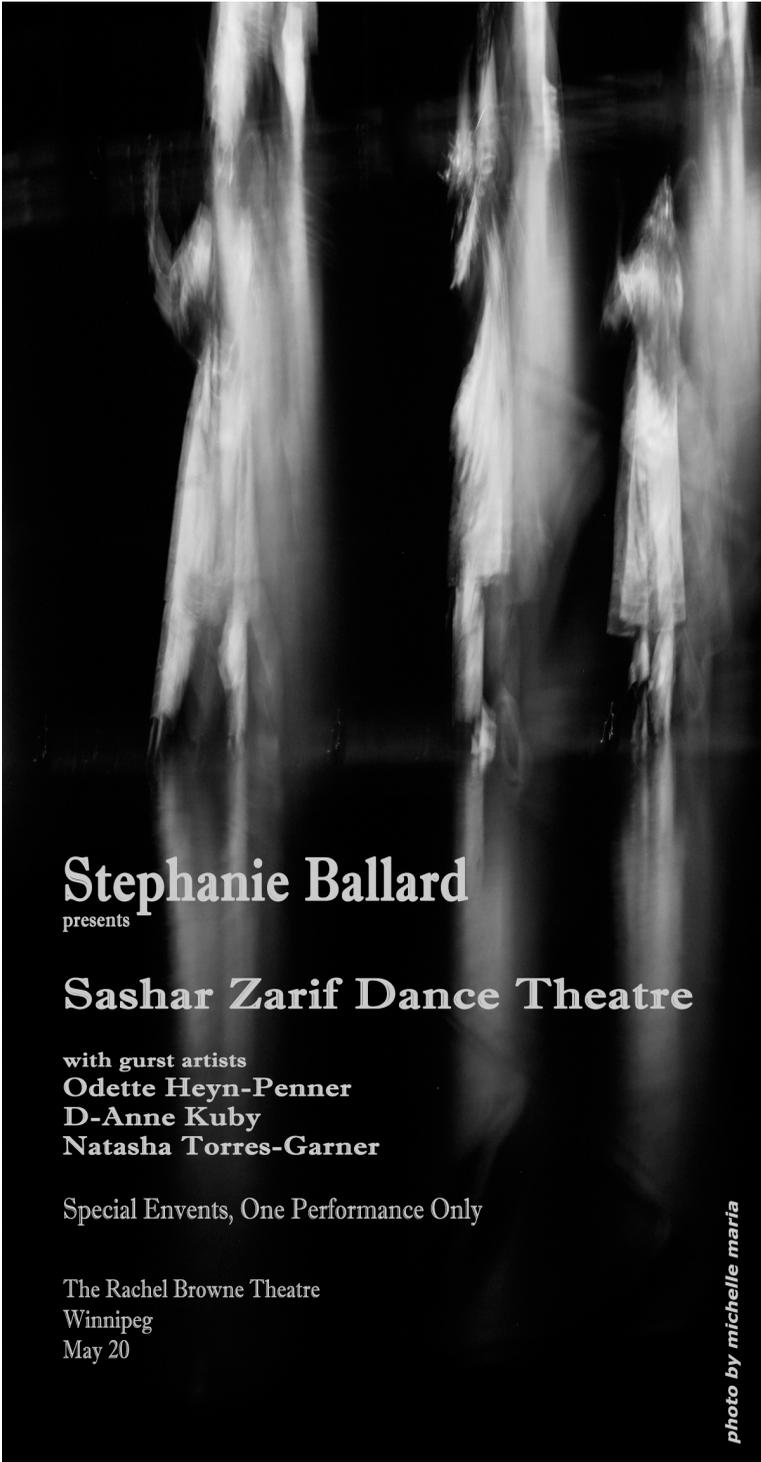
Art Administration – Christine Moynihan,

Dance Umbrella of Ontario

For touring and other information please visit

[www.sashardance.com](http://www.sashardance.com)

Or contact Christine Moynihan at [christine@danceumbrella.net](mailto:christine@danceumbrella.net)



**Stephanie Ballard**  
presents

**Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre**

with guest artists  
**Odette Heyn-Penner**  
**D-Anne Kuby**  
**Natasha Torres-Garner**

Special Events, One Performance Only

The Rachel Browne Theatre  
Winnipeg  
May 20

photo by michelle maria