

DanceWorks

NEXTSTEPS
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present **SASHAR ZARIF DANCE THEATRE**
solos of my life



Graphic Design by Sashar Zarif – Photography by Mahla Ghasempour

May 12 – 14, 2011
@ 8 pm
Enwave Theatre,
Harbourfront Centre, Toronto

...Toronto's leading presenter of

PROGRAMME

Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre solos of my life

Love affairs of my past for the future — *solos of my life* is a collection of personal stories that I have carried with me for miles and years. These stories are the very foundation of who I think I was, who I am and who I want to be. It is with these stories that I remember the past, relate to present, and dream of the future. Contemporarizing these stories has been a goal of my artistic work so that as I revisit these stories, I can move on; be on the move constantly; for when I don't move, I don't exist.

Molded into one story, *solos of my life*, was embraced by four beautiful, wise souls, their presence and care: Sylvie, Viv, Marie-Josée, and Katherine whose generosity and love has been a guiding light for this journey of re-discovery.”

Artistic Director — Sashar Zarif
Choreography and Concept — Sashar Zarif

Music

Music Design – Sashar Zarif
Music Production – Eric Cadesky
Live music performance and arrangement – Sashar Zarif , Katherine Duncanson
Archival music – Shovket Alakbarova, Rashid Behbudov, Khan Nene by Ostad Sahriyar

Performers-Interpreters

Sylvie Bouchard, Marie-Josée Chartier, Katherine Duncanson, Viv Moore, and Sashar Zarif

Costume and Set Design — Sashar Zarif

Dramaturge — Sohail Parsa

Creative facilitator – Katherine Duncanson

Lighting Design — Arun Srinivasan

Stage Manager — Gillian Lewis

Lobby Display/ Painting of solos of my life: Original Design by Sashar Zarif, Painting by Hasti Mirhadi
Photography by Mahla Ghasempour

For Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre

Artistic Director — Sashar Zarif

Resident Artist – Pirouz Yousefian

For touring and other information please visit www.sashardance.com

Or contact us at Sashar@sashardance.com

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, North Africa and the Americas 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

"We all have our own stories that sustain us. These stories are created to strengthen our self-awareness and are informed by the tales from our journey of growing up. Stories are our right of passage."

Sashar Zarif, Artistic Director

... she cleansed my heart, in the stream of lights reflected on her long beautiful black hair, flowing from wide-open windows. And how full her prayer was with the moon, with clouds, with colourful rainbows. But yet I could see the rocks, the sea and the stones through the soul of her dance in her **Glass House**, lost in life, in time, and innocence....

... she would then let go of the bamboo fan and start to dance with her face, head and shoulders. I used to call this part **One Head and Two Shoulders**. Seated on the old carpet in front of the walking closet, grandma would continue to sing the tune and dance with her upper body. And this was the moment I would get up and be her legs for her dance....

...I am the **Footsteps of the Wind**, the image of fire, burst in water, and looking for the earth..... as imaginary as my solitary gatherings, this soul has much to search for

Artistic Statement

I realize that what I have been working for is to develop an identity - one that includes, on one hand, the diversity of cultures I have been a part of and have lived in, and on the other hand, the urge to belong and to be part of the texture of the community I live in now. The dance I create, regardless of its traditional or contemporary format, is a product of displacement and placement, of making a place for myself in the new space in which I am living now. I owe it to myself and other people like myself, who live here now, to have our stories told and to reconsider our idea of identity. Other people should hear our life stories, our dreams and hopes through an introduction to our identity. I realize that anyone, and in this era, many of us, who claim a more complex identity are marginalized. A person who lived through many displacements, like myself, clearly carries with him/her many different allegiances or belongings, and he/she ought to be allowed to use all of them. My object is not to discover within myself some essential allegiance in which I may recognize myself. Rather the opposite: I scour my memory to find as many ingredients of my identity as I can. I then assemble and arrange them. I don't deny any of them.

Special Thanks:

To my mother, 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 without whom I could never find the courage and magic to tell my stories.

To Claudia Moore, Holly Small, Heidi Strauss, Carol Anderson, Elnaz H., Elnaz D., Farzad, Minoo and Pirouz, Hassan Zerehi and Shahrvand, Jennifer Watkins, Dianne and Savi at DW Communicatons; the Mongolian wrestler, my grandmothers, and the spirits of the ones not with us any more.

To Nasrin Mahdavi, Toronto Art Council, Ontario Art Council, and Dance Ontario for their generous support.

To DanceWorks and Harbourfront Centre and heart felt gratitude to Mimi and Rosslyn and the ones here tonight and out there to come.

ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES

Sashar Zarif is an internationally renowned multi-disciplinary artist, educator, and researcher in the field of dance ethnology and ethno musicology. 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 Sufi-Shamanic arts of Central and Western Asia including Azerbaijan, Iran in the west to Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Western Mongolia in the East. His area of dance practice includes both traditional and contemporary forms. Sashar has collaborated with such prominent artists as Alim Quasimov (a soloist for Yo-yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble), Rizwan- Muazzam Qawwali and Canadian artists Holly Small, John Oswald, Eric Cadesky, Pirouz Yoursefan and Yasmina Ramzy. Sashar performs nationally and internationally with his company, **Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre**, and is the recipient of Azerbaijan State Artists for the People Award, Skills for Change New Pioneer Award and was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Performance in Dance for "**Choreographies of Migration**".

Sylvie Bouchard is originally from Montréal and began her training there, before moving to Toronto in 1983 to study with the School of the Toronto Dance Theatre. She subsequently joined the Company and performed nationally and internationally with them. Sylvie has also performed with other Companies and artists such as: Kaeja d'Dance, Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, Dancemakers, Denise Fujiwara, Roger Sinha, Susie Burpee, Sashar Zarif and Peggy Baker. She has worked extensively with many independent choreographers, has toured with Manaka Thakkar, performing a Robert Desrosiers co-creation and has been a guest artist with the Danny Grossman Company. In 1999, she presented her Dora Mavor Moore nominated solo *Cassiopeia* in Toronto and at the Canada Dance Festival. In 1997, Sylvie Bouchard formed the Company CORPUS with artistic partner David Danzon. With him, she co-created 8 works, which she performed and toured extensively throughout the world, between 1997 and 2008. In 1993, Sylvie Bouchard created Dusk Dances. From 1995, Dusk Dances grew under the artistic direction of both Sylvie Bouchard and David Danzon, and through the Company CORPUS, until 2008, when Ms. Bouchard was made sole Festival Director. Sylvie Bouchard is the recipient of the 2009 KM Hunter Artist Award in dance, and is the artistic director of **BoucharDanse**, a new Company that serves as an umbrella for Ms. Bouchard's artistic endeavors.

Eric Cadesky has been composing for ballet and modern dance since 1983 and has created more than 60 works for that medium. He has created pieces for the National Ballet of Canada, Ballet BC, Lyon Opera Ballet, Mannheim Ballet, Ballet Jorgen, Montanaro Dance and was Composer In Residence for Desrosiers Dance Theatre for 8 years. He has worked with many of Canada's most gifted independent choreographers. The premier of his dancing career was also that career's swan song. His one performance in the National Ballet's **Nutcracker** of placing an injured cookie on a stretcher and racing off stage did not inspire the critics.

A multi-faceted artist and award winning creator and performer, **Marie-Josée Chartier** moves easily between the worlds of dance, music, opera and multi-media in the roles of choreographer, performer, director, vocalist or teacher. In 2003, she founded **Chartier Danse** to support her creative activities and to engage in large-scale collaborations. Her choreographic repertoire is greatly influenced by contemporary visual art, music and literature in terms of concept, composition and dynamic structure. From there, personal themes weave themselves to create works that try to decipher, expose or deconstruct the vulnerability of human beings. Over a distinguished career, she has created over thirty-five works that have been presented in dance series and festivals in Canada, Europe and Latin America. She has received Dora Mavor Moore Awards in Choreography, Performance and Production as well as the K.M. Hunter Award for Dance. www.chartierdanse.com

Katherine Duncanson is an interdisciplinary performer, vocal director, composer, music educator and creative facilitator. A prolific performer, she has collaborated with national and international dancers, composers, actors, writers, visual artists, performance artists, magicians, musicians and clowns.

Viv Moore has been dancing, choreographing and acting both collaboratively and as a solo artist since 1979, in dance, theatre, film and video. Born in England, Viv trained in ballet, from the age of 4, then later, in social dance, jazz, national dance and modern at Chelsea College of P.E., Eastbourne. Extensive travel was then mixed with further training in Calgary, Montreal and Vancouver. She performed in the vaudeville group the **Roaring Twenties** (1974-78) in Alberta, co-founded **Remote Control** with Dave Wilson (1979) and **The Illuminations** with Wilson and Pam Johnson (1990) in Toronto. She has performed and taught in universities, arts schools and colleges in Sweden, Australia, England and Canada. Viv has co-written

several publications, presented at international conferences and has worked with community dance (RNIB, deaf & partial hearing) in London, England and in Canada (CNIB, multi-disabilities and psychiatric survivors). Viv has been on part-time staff teaching Movement, Creative, Contact and Social Dance at Humber College (Theatre and Film & TV Departments) for 26 years where she has choreographed main stage musicals such as Cabaret, Godspell and Threepenny Opera. Viv was National Co-ordinator of **Fight Directors, Canada** (1994-97), gaining Advanced Actor Combatant level. She received a 1998-99 Harold (independent theatre). Many times Dora nominated, Viv is a movement coach, choreographer, rehearsal director, and outside eye for plays, musicals and films (Theatre Direct, Cahoots and others). She acts with Theatre Rusticle (***Birnam Wood, The Stronger***) MackenzieRo (***Rake's Progress, Teach i dTír***) and has danced with Holly Small, Fujiwara Dance Inventions, Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre and Half Crown Clog. Viv's solo performance work (***Bogie Woman***—1999 Paula Citron fFIDA Award; ***Body Geometry, 7th Angel***—2002 Dora nomination; solo show ***Worcestershire Saucy***) is inspired by an eclectic mix of dance, theatre, English Music Hall, stage combat and butoh. On-going research into her culture, dances and spiritual traditions led her to receive her MA (Dance) and an invitation to dance in London (England) at EFDSS (English Folk Dance & Song Society). Upcoming: Actor in ***Peter & The Wolf*** (Theatre Rusticle) Aug 2011.

SOHEIL PARSA is a director, actor, writer, dramaturg and choreographer, whose career spans three decades and two continents. In his native Iran, Soheil completed studies in Theatre Performance at the University of Tehran and began a career as an actor and director. Arriving in Canada with his family in 1984, he completed a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at York University and went on to establish **Modern Times Stage Company**, recognized as one of the leading innovative theatre companies in Canada. Under Soheil's artistic direction, Modern Times has garnered forty-two Dora Awards and Nominations since it's founding in 1989. Soheil has received three Dora Awards for his direction and two for his co-translation and adaptation, and numerous international prizes. He has also been short-listed two times for the Siminovitch Prize in Theatre, the most prestigious theatre award in Canada, for his work as a director.

ARUN SRINIVASAN has worked extensively in Toronto's performing arts industry for the last 16 years in dance, theatre, music, and special events. For dance, collaborators have included Peter Chin, Danny Grossman, Robert Desrosiers, Claudia Moore, Denise Fujiwara, Ballet Jörgen, Carol Anderson and Holly Small. He was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Lighting Design in 2003 for Romeo/Juliet Remixed. Arun also teaches for the Dance and Theatre Departments at York University. Productions have taken him to Ukraine, Malaysia, Singapore, India and across North America. When not working in the dark all the time, he can be found at the park on the monkey bars with his wife and kids. Arun is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada