



# The Oyan! Project (Awakening)

## Creating Living Steps Out of Ancient Echos

Canada's acclaimed **Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre** and composer **Franghiz Ali-Zadeh** bring world premiere to the Aga Khan Museum  
October 24, 2015 @ 8 pm and October 25, 2015 @ 2 pm

*"Franghiz Ali-Zadeh writes music that vacillates between dense Western chromaticism, Azeri folk influences and a quasi-mystical style all her own."* ~ *New York Times*

*"Sashar Zarif, a superbly expressive and charismatic dancer"* ~ *The Globe and Mail*

**The Oyan! Project (Awakening)**, an unprecedented, multi-layered evening of integrated dance and music, receives its world premiere at the Aga Khan Museum on October 24 and 25, 2015. Drawing upon the ancient mystic traditions of Western and Central Asia, the production is a remarkable collaboration between award-winning dancer-choreographer **Sashar Zarif** and internationally-acclaimed composer **Franghiz Ali-Zadeh**. Based on her unique mutant contemporary and traditional composition, also called **Oyan!**, this dance creation investigates and unlocks the dual spirit of light and awakening. This is done through an exploration of the traditional elements of the composition, performed by two young Azerbaijani artists, **Elnur Mikayilev** (*Kamancheh*/fiddle player) and **Miralam Miralamov** (*Mugham* singer).

**The Oyan! Project** is the second of a planned trilogy to introduce the art of Mugham - connected to the Sufi and Shamanic cultures of Azerbaijan, Iran and Central Asia - to Canadian audiences through Sashar Zarif's Dance of Mugham Series. These are the same cultures that have been introduced to the West through the poetry and philosophy of people like Rumi and Omar Khayyam.

*Oyan/Awakening* is a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through body, mind and emotions. It is an innovative investigation of Mugham, a devotional integrated practice of poetry, music and dance, in a contemporary context. This international multi-disciplinary collaboration facilitates an encounter between remembering, perceiving, and imagining in time and space. *Oyan/Awakening* is a physical incarnation of the emotional allegory, "Oyan!", a masterpiece composition by Franghiz Ali-Zadeh.

**This unique and thrilling dance and music concert is not to be missed.**

**Sashar Zarif** is a multi-disciplinary performing artist, educator and researcher. His practice is steeped in the artistry and history of traditional and ritualistic performing arts including Sufi and Shamanic practices of the Near East and Central Asia. He has formulated a contemporary dance style by integrating classical poetry, music and the dance of these areas. It is called Dance of Mugham. His special pedagogy and creative approach to the development and practice of dance, is based on human experience and memory. Zarif's interests are identity, globalization, and cross-cultural collaborations. During the last two decades and across 29 countries, he promoted cultural dialogue through intensive fieldwork, residences and performances. He has toured Europe, North Africa, Central and Western Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. He is a research associate at York Centre for Asian Studies and is on the board of directors of Dance Ontario. Zarif is the recipient of numerous awards working with acclaimed Canadian and international artists. He was a recipient of the 2006 Toronto International Dance Festival's Paula Citron Award. He was named the 2008 recipient of the Skills for Change New Pioneer Award for the Arts and was named an Artistic Ambassador for Diversity. He was awarded a Chalmers Fellowship Grant from Ontario Arts Council in 2010. In 2011 for his contributions, he received the honorary title of Master of Dance and was made an Honorary Faculty Member by the Uzbekistan Institute of Choreography in Tashkent. In 2012 he was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

**Franghiz Ali-Zadeh** is without doubt one of the leading composers of our time and the only representative of Eastern contemporary classical music who has achieved impressive success in the West. A UNESCO Artist for Peace laureate, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh's compositional style moves between the traditional music of her homeland of Azerbaijan and the (at times also experimental) music of the present day. Two forces are at work in her, she once said, and the new results from the contradiction between them. Her style is characterized by a bold synthesis of these two worlds. Ali-Zadeh creates music in which Eastern modal thinking merges with Western constructive elements. In recent years, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh made two fundamental works - two-act opera "Intizar" ("Awaiting") by request of Mstislav Rostropovich, also the chamber opera "Your name means the Sea" by request of Houston Grand Opera. Successful premiere of "Intizar" staged after the death of Rostropovich during the "First Festival" in his memory in Baku on December 2007. The premiere of the opera "Your name means the Sea" took place in May 2011 on the stage of Grand Opera in Houston and also was a great success. After that, the 5 more opera performances staged which finished the season 2010-2011 years. Moreover, the American violinist super star - Hilary Hahn ordered Franghiz Ali-Zadeh piece - "Impulse" for her world tour. Franghiz Ali-Zadeh conferred with the Order of Glory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2007, awarded with the national awards "Ugur" ("Success") in 2009 and "Zirve" in 2011. The New York Times write "Ali-Zadeh's writes music that vacillates between dense Western chromaticism, Azeri folk influences and a quasi-mystical style all her own."

Award-winning Azerbaijan filmmaker **Elchin Musaoglu**, one of the foremost film directors in Asia, premieres his short documentary *Three Apples II* as part of the show. Based on Sashar Zarif's pilgrimages back to his memory, the film tracks Zarif's search for the Dance of Mugham and the process of making of *Oyan!* as well as for his own self-discovery. Dramaturgy & Creative Facilitation by **Elizabeth Langley**, Lighting by **Arun Srinivasan**, Costumes by **Sashar Zarif**. **The Oyan! Project** is supported by Ontario Arts Council.

For more information - [contact@sashardance.com](mailto:contact@sashardance.com), 416-450-4529 For tickets - [www.agakhanmuseum.org/tickets](http://www.agakhanmuseum.org/tickets)