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SAATCHI & SAATCHI

Fine Jewellery  
Since 1925



# SAATCHI & SAATCHI

Fine Jewellery  
Since 1925

**PAST** The Saatchi family's history in jewellery and watch repair goes back 125 years. When the then-Shah of Iran needed to repair the plethora of luxury clocks that ran along his palace walls, he called on the well known Swiss clock repairman, Mr. Saatchi, who soon became his personal clock and watch repairman.

At that time, clocks were known only to be in the possession of the wealthy few. Being a rare luxury item, it was difficult to find men who were experienced and knowledgeable in the art of repairing clocks. Thus, to be called to the Shah's palace was a grand symbol of prestige and power. Mr. Saatchi was given the chance to not only perform his craft but, furthermore, be associated with royalty.

After arriving in Iran, Mr. Saatchi settled down in Tehran — the country's lively, bustling, capital. Here, he established his position as a clock repairman. After four successive generations of working for the Shah, the Saatchi's were a well-known family. The Clock Museum of Tehran was named after the Saatchi's in 1988, which displayed many of their clocks and designs.

As a young man, Asghar Saatchi, alongside his siblings, looked to expand the family name and venture into the art of jewellery making and design. Asghar Saatchi took on the challenge to open up his first of many stores, Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery. After many successful years as a well-respected jeweller, Asghar Saatchi decided to take his craft to the West, where he moved him and his family to Canada.

**PRESENT** The doors of Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery first opened on Robson Street on April 16, 1989. Asghar Saatchi opened his first Vancouver location alongside his youngest son Peyman Julio Saatchi and only daughter Dina Saatchi. Peyman Julio began working for the family business at the age of 16, coming into work after school and on weekends.

Dedicated to helping his father's business flourish in this new country, together, the team of three worked tirelessly to establish the reputation they have gained today. In August of 2016, Peyman Julio bought out the family business from his father and continues to work alongside his sister. What began as a small store, will now be celebrating its 32nd anniversary in Vancouver this April. Today, Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery is recognized across Canada as trusted jewellers with one of a kind, custom-made-designed jewellery and their new line of branded Saatchi watches. With their hard work and skill, the Saatchi family in Vancouver continues to carry on the legacy of five generations.



PEYMAN JULIO SAATCHI  
OWNER AND CEO

**FUTURE** Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery looks to give their customer's unique, precious, one-of-a-kind jewellery from around the globe. The company travels across the world five times a year to

attend the jewellery shows Baselworld in Switzerland, the Vicenza Jewelry Boutique Show in Italy, JCK Las Vegas, the Bangkok Jewellery Show, and the Hong Kong Jewellery Show. Currently, the company manufactures 70% of their items. Peyman Julio's future goal is to turn Saatchi & Saatchi Fine Jewellery into a brand that brings customers fine jewellery, Swiss watches, and original Saatchi accessory products.

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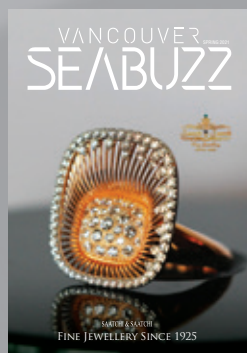
## THE STORY OF HOPE!

With the advent of the virtual world, we are no stranger to social media. We open our eyes to the screen of our cell phones, checking out all the social media apps we have one by one. As if we cannot leave our beds until we are caught up with what had been posted while we were asleep. This is how we feel a variety of emotions almost every day before even getting up! We become happy, sad, impressed, sorry, or sometimes mad by watching different Reels or pictures. However, what I have noticed recently on social media more than ever, is the vision of hope! Motivational messages, nice and heart-warming photos, precautions giving notes on how to stay healthy by being compliant to COVID-19 safety measures. These are words of hope for better days to come. Hopes to look forward to ending these long, intolerable times, hopes for the vaccine to free us all! Hopes to see a future that would very much look like our past!

At the start of the outbreak, the tourism industry was shut down and the prospect money fellow was cut off. Local businesses struggled with financial problems and fought heroically to survive. They tried to get the best of all government support and backed one another in every single opportunity they could. People in the community became a valuable source of income for businesses by shopping locally. Some hotels offered the Work-from-Hotel as a replacement for those who had to work from home but found it difficult to handle the responsibility of their jobs out of their workplace. That's how hotels became a great help when they provided a safe space for people to escape their worries and do whatever they needed to do to keep their jobs. I believe this was a unique opportunity for everyone to do their parts and put on show the importance of our community's wellbeing.

The story of hope is amazing! We need it no matter how big or small it is. During these past long months of the pandemic, we learned to be patient and to hope for better days. With the arrival of the new year, here in Vancouver SeaBuzz Advertising, we simply wish you the best! Not the cliché best, the real true best! We wish you the best of health and prosperity, and we will assure you that when we all could come so far, we will definitely be able to pass the finish line.

Mehnoush Shahbandi  
Editor-in-chief



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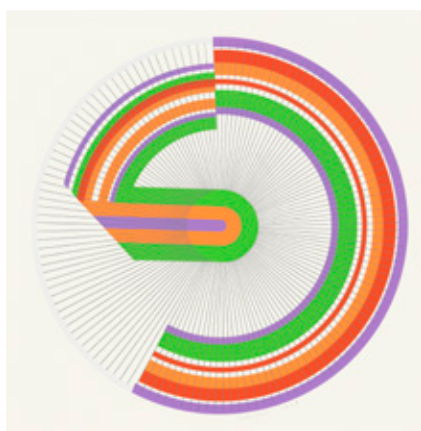


# Vancouver Art Gallery

Spring 2021

## Op Art in Vancouver

October 17, 2020 to April 5, 2021

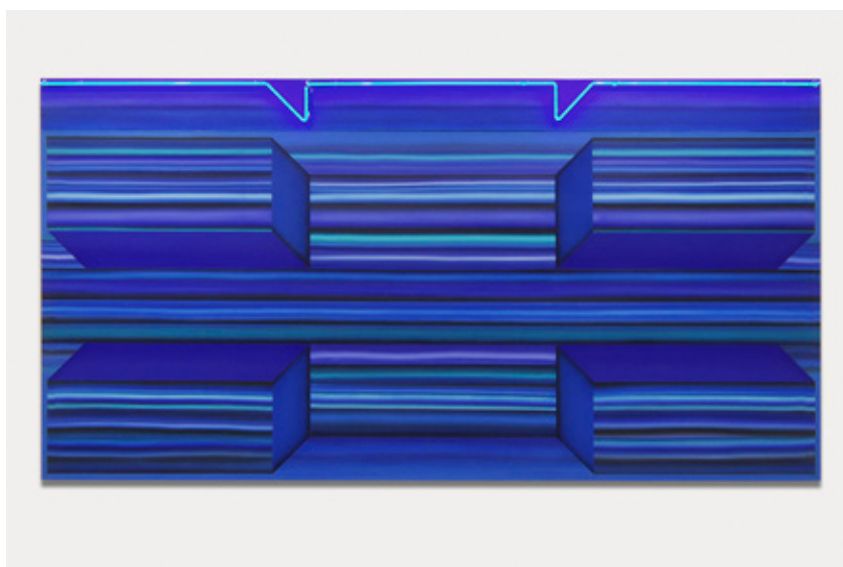


**Gordon Smith**

*Osaka*, 1968

screenprint on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Gordon and Marion Smith



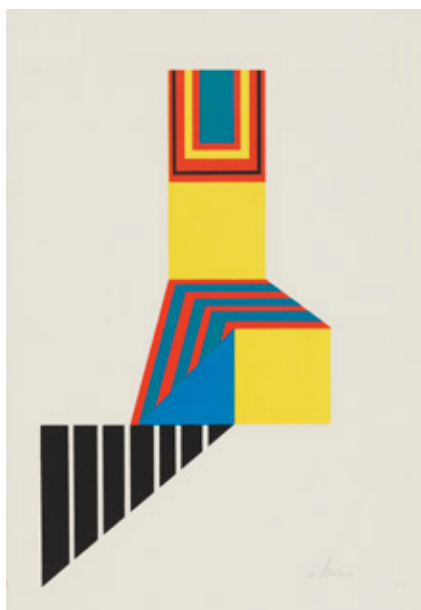
**Joan Balzar**

*Blue Neon*, 1967

acrylic, wood, neon tubing, electronic transformer on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Alexander Cotter

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery



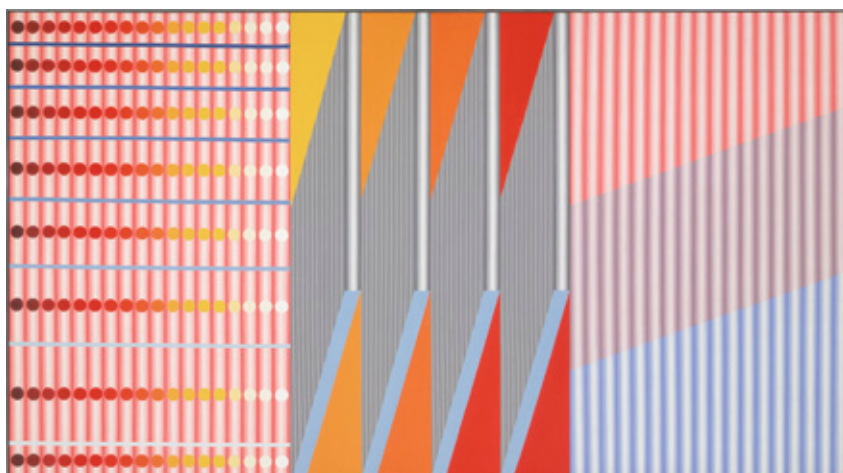
**Takao Tanabe**

*Window*, 1967

screenprint on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of the Artist

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery



**Michael Morris**

*Untitled*, 1967

acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. Alfred Blundell

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

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# Vancouver Art Gallery

Spring 2021

## Uncommon Language

October 17, 2020 to April 5, 2021



**Ken Lum**

*Melly Shum Hates Her Job*, 1989

chromogenic print

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Dr. Doug Foster

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery



**Allison Hrabluik**

*The Splits*, 2015 (still)

digital video with sound, 15 min.

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Purchased with proceeds

from the Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery



**Beau Dick**

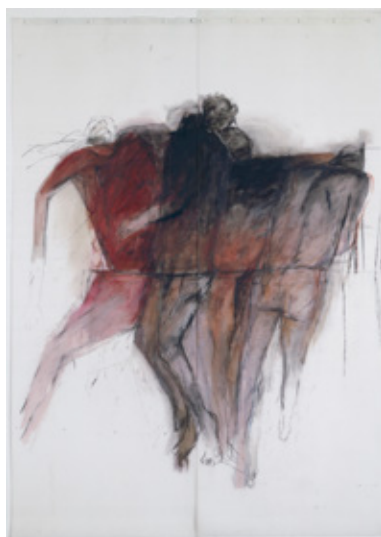
*Dzunukwa Dance Mask*, 2002

yellow cedar, hair, mirror, acrylic paint

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,

In Memory of Peter and Alice Smith of Kalugwis

Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery



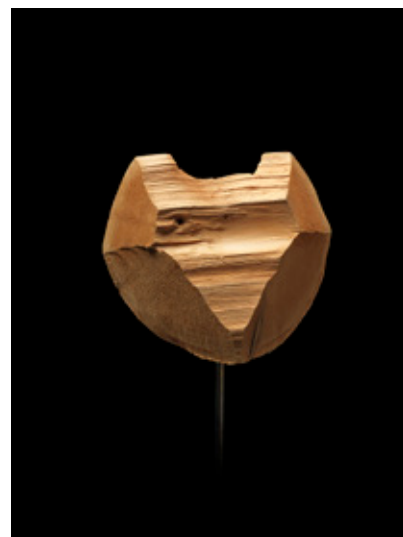
**Betty Goodwin**

*Carbon*, 1987

oil stick, charcoal, pastel, wax, wash on geofilm

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund

Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery



**Sonny Assu**

*Longing #23*, 2011

found cedar

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Purchased

with the proceeds from the Audain Emerging Artists

Acquisition Fund and the support of the Canada

Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program,

Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver Art Gallery

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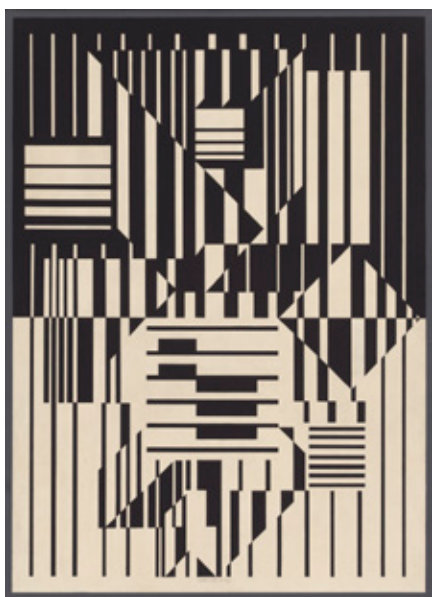
Spring 2021

## Victor Vasarely

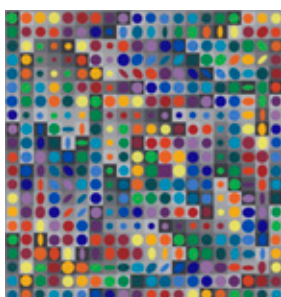
October 17, 2020 to April 5, 2021



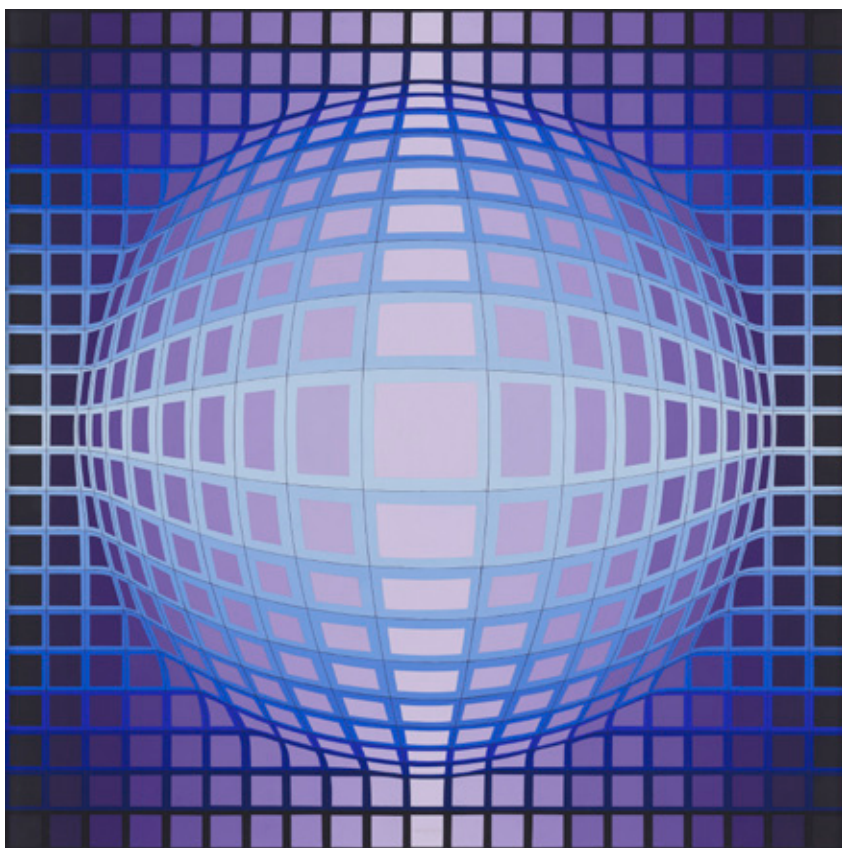
*OERVENG*, 1968  
tempera on wood composite board  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,  
Gift of the Estate of Kathleen E. Reif, © SOCAN, 2020  
Photo: Ian Lefebvre, Vancouver Art Gallery



*CALCIS*, 1959  
oil on wood composite board  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,  
Gift of the Estate of Kathleen E. Reif, © SOCAN, 2020  
Photo: Ian Lefebvre, Vancouver Art Gallery



*Planetary Folklore (Orion MC)*, 1964  
screenprint on paper  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,  
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe, © SOCAN, 2020  
Photo: Ian Lefebvre, Vancouver Art Gallery



*VEGA-VA*, 1968-69  
tempera on paperboard  
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,  
Gift of the Estate of Kathleen E. Reif, © SOCAN, 2020  
Photo: Ian Lefebvre, Vancouver





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# PERSIAN DANCE

BY MEHRNOUSH SHAHBANDI

## FROM ACHAEMENIDS TO QAJAR

The Art of Persian Dance has had an important role in Persian culture. However, there have been some tragic incidents to stop or destroy this precious art, the enemies' invasions, religious prohibition, and some narrow-minded governors. Nevertheless, the art of dancing remained alive in different cities and amongst different tribes all over the country as a social phenomenon. The origin of the Iranian Ceremonial Dance is considered to go back to as early as the time of Mithra, the God of Light. In this cult, the most important ritual was a dance, performed by men, to worship Mithra. This ceremonial act was believed to promote good health and the strength of life. This dance is also the

origin of the sacred Persian dance. The Achaemenids, the world's first culturally and religiously tolerant empire, made some cultural exchanges with other ancient civilizations like Egypt and Greece. They sent some Persian choreographers and dance masters and received sportsmen, poets, and dancers. This first time ever "acculturation" was one of the numerous and noble characteristics of the Achaemenids, the dynasty which ruled many nations from India in the Far East to Egypt in North Africa for centuries. Symbolic dance with the purpose of entertainment and military dance at the times of the battles and wars were performed. Dancing as a religious ritual in Zoroastrianism (an ancient, still practiced Persian Faith) was also very



popular and important among the Achaemenians.

With the Arab and later the Mongol invasions to Iran, many historical monuments were ruined, and Persian culture went through inescapable turbulence. Invaders took over the country and Iran became politically unstable. The invaders' religions became the new mandatory belief which caused drastic destruction around Iranian culture and changed people's fundamental social behavior.

Dancing, along with many other Persian historical heritages, was prohibited and close to the edge of extinction. And it was not until the rise of Sama', that people could enjoy dance performance again. Sama' Dance is a spiritual performance of the mystic Sufi faith originated in literature and conducted by religious men. In Sufism, dancing spiritually and selflessly at the time of praying, is a way to forget oneself and be closer to God. Rumi, one of the greatest poets in Persian literature, is well known as the most appreciated Sufi of all times.

Dancing in its present form is rooted in the Iranian folkloric performance among regional groups and nomads. This kind of dance was referred to as Royal Court Dancing, which was an old traditional act among Qajar women in the Qajar dynasty. Qajar's kings were very fond of female dancers to entertain them and their guests, and although this kind of performance was not respected by the ordinary people, it later became a social phenomenon and conducted during ceremonies like coronations, royal marriages, national traditions, and festivals like Norouz.

#### THE REVIVAL OF PERSIAN DANCE IN PAHLAVI'S DYNASTY

In Pahlavi dynasty huge efforts were made in order to modernize Iran. Among these efforts was the great concentration on reviving and developing different styles of dance; from prehistoric and folkloric Persian original dance to the

classical ballet and contemporary choreographies inspired by Persian culture and heritage.

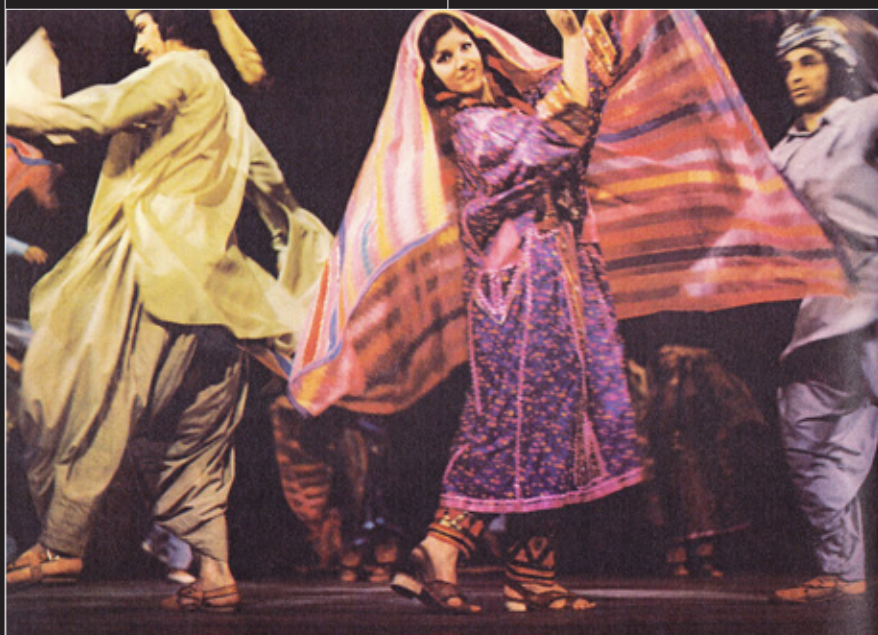
The history of Persian ballet started with Madame Cornelli, a Russian immigrant, and Madame Yelena Avedisian, of Armenian origin. They trained children in Tehran, Tabriz and Qazvin in their private dance schools from 1928 to the year of the disappearance of public dance in Iran, in 1980.

By the initiative of the Ministry of

found its rightful places in the Iranian performing and theatrical arts.

#### BACK TO PRESENT!

Despite the long history behind the art of dance in Persian culture, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, it has been immensely limited, isolated, and neglected due to government policies. The National Ballet Company was dissolved and using dance in any theatrical and movie production including all



Culture and Arts, "National Ballet Academy of Iran" was formed in 1956 and dance schools received governmental support. In 1962, Madame Yelena established the "Song and Dance Ensembles" with 150 participant students. Her repertoire included ballet choreographies with Persian folkloric themes.

During the 1930s to the 1950s, a new kind of entertaining dance was developed and known as a popular dance. It had its roots in Qajar's traditions and was practiced as a solo improvised dance. It was performed by ordinary people and aimed only as entertainment at private gatherings and parties. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the genre of popular dance was also adopted greatly by the movie production at the time and dancing once again was accepted among the traditional Iranian society and

public performances was banned. After more than 40 years, this deprivation, however, couldn't vanish the art of dancing for Iranian people. New generations of Iranian ballet dancers appeared in the diaspora in many countries all over the world. The choreographers and talented ballet dancers continue educating the young and interested generation and keep this Persian heritage alive beyond the borders. The story of Persian Dance may be sad but definitely is going to have a happy ending.

#### REFERENCE

Kiann, N.(2002). Persian Dance and its forgotten history. *Iran Chamber Society* [http://www.iranchamber.com/cinema/articles/persian\\_dance\\_history01.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/cinema/articles/persian_dance_history01.php)



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**Ali Araghi** is an Iranian writer and translator and the winner of the 2017 Prairie Schooner Virginia Faulkner Award for Excellence in Writing. His writing and translations have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Fifth Wednesday Journal*, and *Asymptote*, among others.

His debut novel, *The Immortals of Tehran*, was published in April by Melville House. As a PhD student of Comparative Literature at Washington University in St. Louis, he is working on English translations of Persian literature. He lives in St. Louis.

## THE IMMORTALS OF TEHRAN

**Hardcover:** 400 Pages  
**ISBN:** 9781612198187  
**Publisher:** Melville House  
**Language:** English  
**Publication Date:** April, 2020

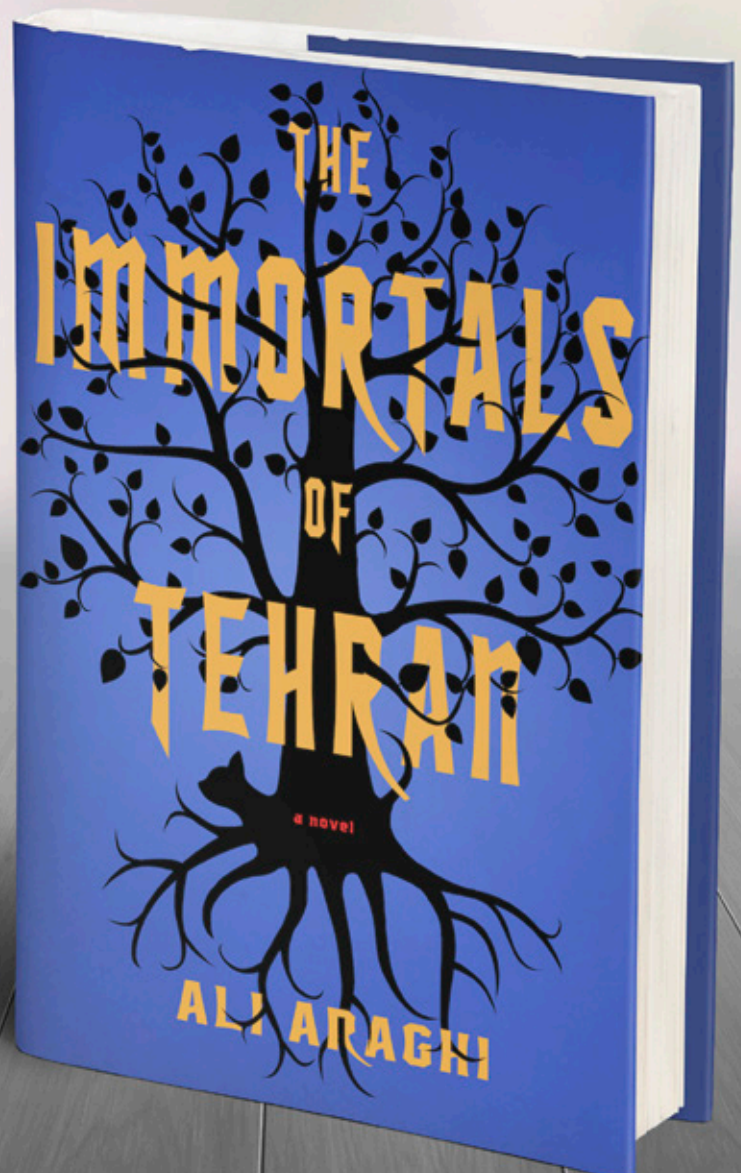
Ahmad Tokash-Vand spends his childhood in the apple orchards of his grandfather, Khan, until one day his father, Nosser, decides to shoot at the flying Russians spying in the Iranian sky. Nosser's death takes the boy to his great-great-great-great-grandfather, Agha, who has a tale for him about a centuries-old family curse.

A few years later, Ahmad is growing up in the capital city of Tehran, working in a forge, pounding white-hot iron with a hammer and developing an interest in poetry and politics. His poems begin to attract readers and cause controversy. So powerful is his verse that it gives off light. But Ahmad also suspects something interfering with him and his family and wonders whether the mythical curse he heard from Agha is indeed at work.

In a context of famine, loss, and political turmoil, Ahmad's life is anything but monotonous. He becomes a member of the parliament, fathers two determined daughters, and ends up in the heart of the demonstrations that eventually result in the overthrowing of the Shah.

Far from being the story of one protagonist, *The Immortals of Tehran* showcases a large cast of characters at the center of which is the Tokash-Vand family. Agha is a centuries-old teller of stories who lives in a plane tree. The hard-working Pooran, Ahmad's mother, tries to single-handedly keep the family from falling apart. Khan is the patriarch of the Tokash-Vands. His wealth comes from his apple orchards in Tajrish and Damavand and his goal is to provide a better life for his family, especially for his grandson, Ahmad, and to protect him against the curse. Ahmad's teenage daughter, Lalah sneaks out of the house, makes Molotov cocktails for the revolutionaries and falls in love with one of them.

The lives of these characters weave tightly together to create the tapestry of the novel. *The Immortals of Tehran* tells the stories of a family—by metaphor, a people—whose members cause and endure the historical events that pan out between the 1941 invasion of Iran by the Anglo-Russian forces and the 1979 Revolution. The fictional universe the novel creates to tell these stories is one where the real lives in a comfortable symbiosis with the magical. A wedding gown blooming with the sound of Maestro Shahnaz's music, or a fifteen-year winter becomes an unquestionable reality of this world in a way that is reminiscent of Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.



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# LET'S DANCE AROUND THE GLOBE!



GATHERED AND WRITTEN BY:  
MEHRNOUSH SHAHBANDI

## LATIN DANCE

Latin dance is a huge phenomenon in South American cultures. There are many countries in South America which have significant contributions to the Latin Dance styles: Tango from Argentina, Caporales from Bolivia, Samba from Brazil, Cueca from Chile, Cumbia from Colombia, Pasillo from Ecuador, Marinera from Peru, Danza de la Botella from Paraguay, Candombe from Uruguay, and Joropo from Venezuela, are only a few. Social Latin dance, which is called Partner Dance in the Dance Competition jargon, is a prominent style of Latin dancing which tells us

a great deal about the continent's history and its people. Partner Dance is a type of ballroom dancing that is performed by two people as a couple. This kind of dance is originated in Latin America and is a mix of influences of a variety of dance styles from all over the world. It has taken elements from European, African, and indigenous dance cultures.

## KABUKI, JAPANESE DRAMA-DANCE

Storytelling in Japan is mainly through drama, stage arts, and of course different types of traditional Japanese dance. These folk dances,







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or Kagura traditions, tell stories from food-producing activities like fishing and planting rice (Dengaku) to rain dances. There are several kinds of dance in different areas of the country. They can be found in various events and festivals during the year. Kabuki is a classical dance-drama that has always been a significant part of Japanese entertainment. Kabuki, which began for the first time in the dry riverbeds of Kyoto in 1603, is thought to be taken from a form of old traditional dance performed only by women. Kabuki theatres using advanced lighting and sound effects technology are still very popular for the local people and tourists. In performing Kabuki, the dancers wear make-up and costumes and act like professional actors. According to Kanji characters, which is a Japanese writing style, Kabuki means to sing, dance, and skill. Therefore, it is often translated to English as “the art of singing and dancing”.



#### DRAGON DANCE

In festivals celebrating the Chinese New Year, Dragon Dance is performed among Chinese people across the world. While performing the Dragon Dance, a long, heavy dragon made from a round shape of bamboo strips covered by the red cloth of paper and decorated by dragon scales, is moved like a river spirit swimming with the waves. A team of experienced dancers hold a flexible dragon, by the poles at the dragon's joints and perform a dance that is believed to symbolize the historical roles of dragons demonstrating dignity and power. The dragon itself is usually up to 30 meters long and should have odd numbers of joints for success! It represents wisdom, fertility, auspiciousness, and good luck, therefore, the longer the dragon, the more luck it brings along to people.

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Interviewer and editor  
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# LIONS GATE SINFONIA

We think that for an artist to be successful, they need to put their heart and soul into their work. When the artist performs, they share a part of themselves with people. Here, in this interview, we would like Clyde Michell to talk about the love that exists behind the creation of a masterpiece.

Clyde is the Canadian-American founding Conductor and Music Director of Lions Gate Sinfonia and the new Lions Gate Youth Orchestra. He recently moved to Los Angeles, where his wife, Sarah Jackson, plays Solo Piccolo with the world-famous Los Angeles Philharmonic. Sarah and Clyde love their two cats, and enjoy traveling and experiencing different cultures, languages, food, and wine.

1. Hello Clyde and thanks for giving us the time for this interview. first of all, tell us how you have been able to cope with the ups and downs of this pandemic?

Hello to all my friends on the beautiful North Shore of Vancouver! I hope this finds you all well and happy and SAFE and HEALTHY! These are such strange times for all of us, as we are unable to gather in large groups and enjoy get-togethers with family and friends. It has been especially difficult for Lions Gate

Sinfonia, as we are unable to be with our loyal North Shore audiences, sharing our rewarding and beautiful LIVE classical music with you. It just occurred to me today that this is the first time in over 30 years that I will not be leading a fun Holiday concert filled with music of the season, and some audience Sing-Alongs! I know our outstanding professional players are very frustrated by only being able to rehearse and perform with their family members and our few friends within our "Bubble." We have been putting together a few short videos showcasing some of our members, talking about music, and exploring new ways to communicate our passion. That is the only thing keeping me sane right now - knowing that we can still be together virtually and that there are audience members who miss our live performances. In addition to missing the actual LIVE interaction with our loyal fans and friends of Sinfonia, a lot of us really miss the income!

LGS (Lions Gate Sinfonia) is not a full-time orchestra, but we do provide a portion of our players' annual income. Most of us supplement our income with teaching (both private instruction and full-time jobs in public schools) and other music-related activities like playing in other groups for concerts, weddings, bar mitzvahs, or even a non-musical job. For example, I often travel around the country giving workshops for students and amateur musicians, adjudicating band and orchestra competitions, and guest conducting other professional orchestras. Much of that is on a long hold these days.

My last extra "gig" was conducting for a full month across China in the summer of

2019. I really miss the camaraderie and all the food! (Oops - I mean music!)

I suppose the bottom line for all of us is that we just have to wait it out. Now that the vaccines seem to be becoming available, there might be some light at the end of the tunnel. We all can look forward to returning to a new normal in the new year, and we will be able to celebrate Beethoven's NEXT birthday since we have just missed his 250th!

**2. What does music mean to you? and how did it all start in your life? what has kept you going to reach so far ahead?**

Music is a great language that can be understood by all. I love seeing the faces of little children as they hear LIVE instrumental music-making for the first time. It is incredibly rewarding to give concerts in hospitals, community centres, senior residences, and homes for special needs. The joy music can bring to anyone fortunate enough to experience it is almost indescribable. Whether we are playing folk songs from someone's far off homeland or a Mozart Symphony or dance music for Salsa or Tango or Waltzes or Beguine or Jazz or Classical Ballet, the effect on the listener is obvious. No wonder it is said that "MUSIC is the UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE."

I have been around music all my life, but it usually wasn't Beethoven or Bach or Brahms or Tchaikovsky. My parents were heavily involved in our church music programmes, with my Dad as the Choir Director and Mom as Pianist and Organist. At home, we listened mostly to Gospel, Folk, and Country-Western music.



Yes, your Lions Gate Sinfonia Conductor grew up listening to Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash, plus church hymns and spirituals before he discovered Mozart. Mom was an outstanding musician, and taught music in schools, and was the neighbourhood piano teacher. Growing up in a small town in Florida, I didn't do well having piano lessons with Mom at home, choosing to concentrate on baseball and fishing. I enjoyed playing trumpet in the school band, but really caught fire for music when our grade 7 band director asked if I would like to switch to the French Horn (which everyone knows is the most beautiful instrument in the orchestra, yes?!?)

I was fortunate that my parents realized the value of having private lessons on my instrument rather than just attending band class at school, and I soon found myself loving the Horn so much that I was practicing 2 or 3 hours every day. That really cut into my baseball playing, but I was lucky that whatever musical talent I had started to become apparent. From grade 8 through high school, I was the teacher's Assistant Conductor and Drum Major of the Marching Band, so I needed to take some music leadership and conducting classes. I never considered any other career other than becoming a musician and went to college for a Bachelor of Music in French Horn Performance, then a Master of Arts. Those years of diligent practice and serious musical training were worth it, as I had a wonderful career as a professional French Horn player in orchestras in South America (Bogotá, Colombia), the U.S. (Tucson, Arizona), and Canada (with the prestigious Montreal Symphony.) Everywhere I played I was asked to teach and do a little conducting, including at McGill University in Montreal. I finally decided that I should take this "conducting



hobby” a bit more seriously, so I left my positions with the MSO and McGill to go back to university. I got another Master’s degree and Advanced Studies Certificate and formed my own student orchestra so I could get lots of conducting experience with the help of friends. I was fortunate to start my professional conducting career with several semi-pro-orchestras in Southern Ontario: the Georgian Bay Symphony in Owen Sound, the Huronia Symphony in Barrie, and Symphony Hamilton. I also taught and was the orchestra conductor at Wilfrid-Laurier University. I was honoured to be allowed to audition for, and then to win the position of Resident Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony, and moved to downtown Vancouver in 1991. For 10 years I traveled across our great country and to Europe, Asia, and the U.S. to conduct dozens of professional orchestras and opera companies, and to work with various university, student, and amateur groups, too. A fun little side job I slowly got brought into was as a host for music-related TV and Radio shows, such as the old CBC show “As You Like It” and the Knowledge Network’s “Masterworks.” Because I love sharing tidbits and trivia and stories about music and composers, I also love to give informal talks at locations such as Community and Senior Centres, or at the Centennial Theatre before our Sinfonia concerts.

After my contract with the VSO ended, I started my own orchestra right here on the North Shore. Lions Gate Sinfonia was born on October 20, 2000, with an all-Canadian music concert designed for children. Our first event featured a musical called “Miracle Island” about a little girl learning about B.C.’s marine life and activities, written by North Shore performers Laurel and Jan. Since then, your Lions Gate Sinfonia has featured dozens of Canadian soloists and local arts organizations such as Pandora’s Vox, Pacific Spirit Choir, J.P. Fell Bagpipe Band, North Shore Celtic Ensemble, Pro Arte Ballet, and more. It’s been a GREAT 20 years, and we look forward to many more!!!

### 3. How did Lions Gate Sinfonia come to existence and what were the joys and the challenges?

As I wrote above, I found a way to achieve a life-long dream of starting my own orchestra. After 10 years with the VSO as the Resident and Associate Conductor, I wanted to start a new group somewhere in the Lower Mainland. Friends, supporters, and potential new board members suggested cities (all with lovely small theatres) from Abbotsford, Mission, Surrey, and Delta to Squamish and Whistler. Two of my main responsibilities with the VSO had been to scout locations for outreach concerts, and to expand their small (at the time) educational activities. In the 1990s, I had brought the



VSO to the North Shore on several occasions and had done several educational concerts here. In the year 2000, however, North Vancouver’s Centennial Theatre was still a pretty well-kept secret. I suppose it was one of those “Light Bulb” moments when everything just fell into place. The Centennial’s nice, big stage, downstairs dressing and rehearsal rooms, and 700 seats became the perfect home for our new chamber orchestra of 20-30 players. The North Shore didn’t have any professional musical organizations, and I had lots of friends here, so VOILÀ!

The name of this new musical organization required some thought. I did not want the words “symphony” nor “Vancouver” in our title, as that would cause confusion with the VSO. So, SINFONIA was my choice because it means not only the pieces of music typical of the 17th and 18th centuries, but also the group that plays them! It is an Italian word based on the original Greek, which means agreement or concord of sound. Lions Gate was a great name for our new Sinfonia because it tells the world where we are!

Now that we have survived and made our presence felt on the North Shore for 20 years, it is still bewildering to me and our devoted Board of Directors, musicians, and volunteers that some local residents have not heard of us, nor have they been to the Centennial Theatre! That recognition has been our biggest challenge since Day 1. We are very happily recognized as the “Flagship Arts Organization” on the North Shore, and we are grateful for the financial support grants from our NVRC (North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission) as well as from the District of West Vancouver, BC Gaming, and even the Vancouver Foundation. It costs a lot of money to run a professional orchestra; union scale for our players and administrator (plus pension and GST) goes up a little bit

every year. We also have to rent the theatre, pay for sheet music, and bring fabulous soloists in to work with us.

The joys of running LGS are easy: we exist to bring LIVE music to our wonderful audience of kids and families to adults and seniors. The challenges are right in front of us, too: making sure EVERYONE on the North Shore knows about us, and, like all Arts organizations, bridging the financial gap between ticket sales and grants to our expenses.

### 4. How can young music lovers join the Lions Gate Sinfonia?

This is one of my favourite topics! If young people get the proper exposure to many different types of music, they will naturally gravitate toward the kinds they enjoy! I love to present music young people might already know and introduce other things to them. When I’m at home, I usually listen to Gordon Lightfoot (Canada’s very own star troubadour) or Celine Dion (the brilliant songbird from Quebec), or Edith Piaf (the famous French Chanteuse) or Canadian fiddling tunes or movie soundtracks. Yes, I will occasionally listen to some rock and roll from the ‘70s, and ‘80s like our own Spirit of the West, Chilliwack, Blue Rodeo, and the U.S. groups The Eagles and Chicago. I love film scores by John Williams and Elmer Bernstein and Ennio Morricone. And I love new music that I can hear for the first time, especially by any of our brilliant Canadian composers like Michael Conway Baker, Christopher Tyler Nickel, Jordan Noble, Katerina Gimon, Jocelyn Morlock, and my young assistant Gabriella Yorke, to name just a few. I have conducted many concerts of music written for Video Games, and what young person doesn’t recognize “Mario Brothers” or “Zelda” or ... so many more?!!





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Classical Music has been pronounced “DEAD” many times over the centuries. Yes, with our traditions of stuffy, formal music and settings, we seem to appeal more to adults and seniors. Well, let me tell you: my car radio has a bunch of station buttons, and only one is set to Classical! There are so many different kinds of music for different moods and occasions. Our musicians love many kinds of music from many different periods of history, ranging from the Ancient and Medieval of the 1400’s through the Baroque (thank you, Johann Sebastian Bach!) on to the Classical period (Hello, Wolfgang and Ludwig) and Romantics (how about a Tchaikovsky ballet?) and the 20th century (Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring caused riots at its 1913 premiere in Paris) right up to the music of our time. This doesn’t include Film music, Pop, Folk, Rock, etc.

Another way to get young people involved is to have them actually sit in and play in an orchestra! For that reason, we started Lions Gate Youth Orchestra about 10 years ago. Every year, we work with the young musicians on their own material - both “Classical” and more fun and contemporary. They love Themes from James Bond, 007 and Pirates of the Caribbean and Lord of the Rings, but they also love the Nutcracker we do every year with Pro Arte and music from the Disney film “FANTASIA.” My all-time favourite project is our wonderful educational initiative called “Side by Side with Sinfonia,” where the LGYO has rehearsals, coaching sessions, and a concert sitting next to the professional players. The goal is to enthusiastically and imaginatively get young people started, then watch as they get so caught up in making and listening to music that it becomes their favourite subject in school! It worked exactly that way for me; I’ll never forget getting on the big, yellow school bus and going to downtown Orlando to hear the Florida Symphony play THE FIREBIRD! So, if our young people get started on an instrument and enjoy studying music and practicing to improve every day, maybe someday they can join a professional orchestra like LGS, or even become a CONDUCTOR!

4. For the last question can you tell us that as a musician who works in Vancouver and is very close to the Persian community, how much you are familiar with Persian music? By the way, I immensely enjoyed watching and listening to your work of «The Persian Fusion» at Centennial theatre last year.

I have always loved music from different parts of the world, played by players from those nations. I feel the same way about enjoying and learning various cultures,

languages, customs, foods, and art. There’s that old saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do!” In addition to bringing works by Canadian composers on my travels, I’ve conducted Japanese music in Japan, Chinese music in China, Romanian music in Romania, etc., and you know I enjoyed some excellent local cuisine! I went to school at LSU in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and certainly ate my share of crawfish, gumbo, and even alligator!

When I was in Los Angeles getting my Master’s degree, my roommate for the first year was Persian. His family, originally from Tehran, lived in L.A., and his Mother invited us for dinner a few weekends each month. I was introduced to many distinctive Persian flavours and spices and special dishes. More importantly, there was always interesting music playing at their house - and it was nothing like the Mozart and Beethoven I was studying on my French Horn! Thus began my fascination with Persian music and food and customs, and upon moving to Vancouver and starting an orchestra on the North Shore with our significant Persian population... it was only natural to attend musical events by Persian artists and to explore working with these new sounds!

Programming an orchestra’s season of concerts is a rewarding experience. I like to know who our audience is, and what kind of music they like. I also want to have us all reach out a bit, and to stretch ourselves by hearing different combinations of sounds by different

instruments and composers. I have had the great fortune of meeting many Persian musicians and composers, and we came up with the idea of combining traditional instruments such as the Santoor, Tar, Ney, Daf, and Kamanche with our Violins, Cellos, Flutes, Trumpets, etc. It has been a joy to create these interesting new sounds, and to feature Persian songs, too! (Here’s a funny aside: I just found a new dentist, and the hygienist, named Maryam, is from Shiraz! She couldn’t believe it when I sang for her the song Jaan e Maryam...)

There you have it - that is a very roundabout way for a baseball-crazy kid from Florida to end up combining Persian music and musicians with orchestral instruments on the beautiful North Shore! By the way, among the many great cultural losses because of COVID-19 is to not be able to present the Lions Gate Sinfonia line-up of concerts for 2020-21. We were going to start the season with “Persian Salute,” a tribute to the 176 victims of Flight 752. This will not be forgotten, as Sepehr Hojjaty and I have designed a concert with his Vancouver Iranian Choir and several well-known Persian North Shore musicians combined with Sinfonia.

We will stay in touch, my friends. Music will be one of the great ways for us to return to some semblance of normal. Stay tuned and watch for your Lions Gate Sinfonia to rise again when we can all be safe and enjoy more beautiful and musical time together.





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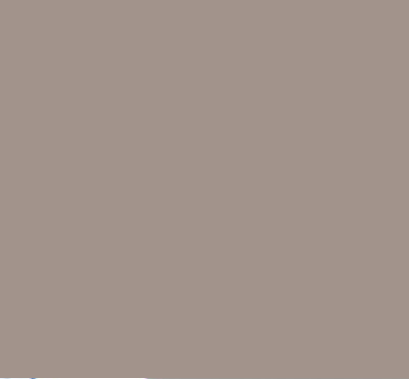
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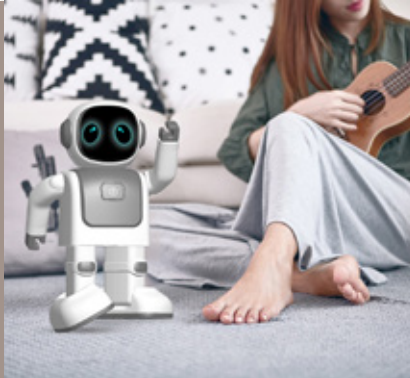




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Written by Maryam Khalighi



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