



Axiom of Choice

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The Persian Student Association at Stanford University presents
Narada Recording Artists:

Axiom of Choice

Friday, October 11, 2002 - 8:00 p.m.

Dinkelspiel Auditorium

Stanford University

\$20 general, \$10 students, seniors, and children

Tickets: <http://tickets.stanford.edu> - (650) 725-ARTS

General Information: <http://psa.stanford.edu/axiom> - (650) 736-4PSA

Palo Alto/Stanford—The Persian Student Association at Stanford presents a performance by Axiom of Choice—a poignant, innovative, and soulful ensemble—at Stanford University’s Dinkelspiel Auditorium. Formed in 1992, Axiom of Choice set out to define a new sound within the context of Persian music. In doing so, the quintet embraces cross-cultural influences while remaining deeply rooted in its heritage. Interweaving quarter-tone guitar, *saz*, *diwan* (Middle Eastern lutes), Persian vocals, the Armenian *duduk*, clarinet, and global percussion instruments, their cohesive sound is both traditionally Persian and globally modern. Their performance at Stanford will feature music from their latest recording *Unfolding* on Narada World Records, which embraces the mystical poetry and spirit of the great astronomer and mathematician Omar Khayyam. **Tickets are available through TICKETS: (650) 725-ARTS.**

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As artists who immigrated to the United States, Axiom of Choice incorporates the sounds of other cultures—both East and West—broadening the scope and appeal of their music while remaining loyal to their Persian roots and retaining the originality, distinctiveness and integrity of their sound. Their original compositions are mostly based on Persian melodies and modes that have universal appeal because of their cohesive, seamless and natural fusion with other styles of music. The musicians work within a unique compositional structure in which both improvisation and personal expression can freely take place. One important goal of the group is to make Persian music more accessible to the broader audience. Another is to communicate through a progressive and new global sound, unique to world music. Their first album *Beyond Denial* (X-Dot 25) was described as “Near Eastern art music, deeply moving and utterly beautiful” by *Rhythm*. Their second release “*Niya Yesh*” (Narada World) became the winner of NAV’s best contemporary world music album in 2001. The LA Weekly Music Awards nominated them Best Recombinant World Music Ensemble in 2001 and 2002.

Axiom of Choice features **Loga Ramin Torkian** on guitar, vocalist **Mamak Khadem**, Clarinetist **Ruben Haratounian**, multi-percussionist **André Harutyunyan**, guitarist and *bouzouki* player musician **Dimitrius Mahlis**.

Loga Ramin Torkian is a guitarist, Middle Eastern lutist, composer and the Artistic Director of Axiom of Choice. Born in Iran, he moved to the United States after the revolution. Loga spent three years studying the *tar*, a Persian lute and joined for a short period a traditional ensemble by the name of *Nava*. But he quickly learned that he could not satisfy his creativity within the framework of traditional music. It was then that he decided to create the quarter-tone guitar to which he adapted many of the *tar* techniques and formed Axiom of Choice, which served as a common ground for other expatriates to work with him. Many master musicians have welcomed his approach.

Mamak Khadem is the vocalist of the ensemble. Trained in the classical Persian style, she weaves emotive textures ranging from bliss to pain, which give a mystical and nostalgic bent to the music. Like

many other immigrants, Mamak discovered her cultural heritage after years of living abroad. The revolution in Iran and subsequently the immense amount of work produced in the early eighties by master musicians of that time became her source of inspiration. Since then, she has seized every opportunity to further her vocal art, regularly traveling back to Iran to study with some of the finest Persian vocalists and masters. In 1992, Mamak joined *Axiom of Choice*, which allowed her to experiment and define her own style. She has expanded her vocal art also by learning other methods of singing, such as classical Indian, and Bulgarian.

She has worked and recorded, among others, with Hans Zimmer (on the score of *Peace Maker*), Jamshied Sharifi, Tulku, Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Joel McNeally (on the soundtrack of the movie *Buffalo Soldier* and TV's *Dark Angel*), and Chris Beck, the composer of the score for TV's *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*.

Ruben Haratoonian from Armenia is a foremost *duduk*, *zurna* and clarinet player. A prominent student of the legendary world-renowned Armenian *duduk* player, Djivan Gasparyan, Ruben is a graduate of the prestigious Aram Khatchaturian College of Music and the Komitas Conservatory and has established himself as a virtuoso performer and the finest *duduk* player to live in the West. Prior to relocating to the United States, he was the Director and soloist for T. Altounyan Armenian State Ensemble of Folk Singing and Dancing. Ruben is esteemed not only for the exquisite tonality of his *duduk* playing but also for his vast knowledge of the melodies and *maqams* (traditional motifs and modes) of not only Armenia but also of the surrounding region, including Iran, Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. In this capacity, he is unique. He joined *Axiom of Choice* in 2000.

André Harutyunyan from Armenia is a multi-percussionist who is highly sought after by Armenian and Persian ensembles around the world. He has recorded and performed with Djivan Gasparyan, Armen Chakmakian and Vas, among others. He has been a member of *Axiom of Choice* since 2000. Greek-American guitarist and bouzouki player musician Dimitrius Mahlis also joins them.

Acclaim for Axiom of Choice

“... music that is tender and passionate, floating through the consciousness with the intensity of a dream.” □ Don Heckman, Los Angeles Times

"UNFOLDING reflects our search for life's deeper meaning, and offers the vehicle of music to smooth the way. This music celebrates the poetical pursuit of knowledge and freedom; it is about seeking, beauty, and above all, love." □ Tom Schnabel, *Café L.A.* (KCRW, Los Angeles)

Directions to Dinkelspiel Auditorium

From Highway 280: Exit on Pagemill Rd. towards Palo Alto. Turn left on Junipero Serra. Right on Campus Dr. East. Left on Mayfield. Another left at the stop sign. Park in the parking lot on your right.

From Highway 101: Exit on Embarcadero West. Pass El Camino. You'll be on Galvez St. Turn left on Campus Dr. Right on Mayfield. Left at the stop sign. Park in the parking lot on your right.

For on-line map see: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/psa/events/avaz/dinkmap.gif>

Axiom of Choice's recent release, *Unfolding*, will be on display at Hear Music in the Stanford Shopping Center next to the Stanford University campus (<http://www.stanfordshop.com>).

About the Persian Student Association at Stanford

The Persian Student Association is a non-political volunteer student organization whose objective is to sponsor Persian social and cultural activities and events, to promote an understanding of Persian culture, to help foster friendship among different cultural groups, and to provide a source of union and support for the Persian community at Stanford. Membership is open to all Stanford students, faculty, staff, and visiting scholars. More information is available at <http://psa.stanford.edu>.

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