



Eagles of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's Ethnographic Dance Ensemble



ABOUT - EAGLES OF AZERBAIJAN

In November 2007, Eagles of Azerbaijan boy's dance ensemble was founded to promote and preserve the culture of Azerbaijan. The ensemble emphasizes the importance of keeping Azerbaijan national dances alive and thriving in order that they may be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. The ensemble became a limited company in July, 2009.

Eagles of Azerbaijan was named after the Azerbaijan map that is shaped liked an eagle, and in turn, the ensemble represents Azerbaijan culture, national/moral values, and traditions from all areas of the country.

Khanlar Bashirov is the founding director of the ensemble who's professional career has spanned over 40 years as a national and international solo performer and master teacher.

Eagles of Azerbaijan ensemble is comprised on boys ages six to teen. All classes and concerts are also accompanied by live musicians including a five and six piece ensemble; including tar player, wind instrument performers on reeds/pipe/balaban/clarinet, two garmon players, and two drummers.

To date, Eagles of Azerbaijan have toured extensively and performed for communities in Luxembourg, Belgium, France, Turkey, Russia, and different regions of Azerbaijan. The ensemble maintains a goal of performing for audiences abroad, in theatres, on television, and beyond in order to reveal and pass along national cultural values, customs and traditions via dance.

ABOUT - KHANLAR BASHIROV

Artistic Founding Director



Khanlar Bashirov is a famous dancer and dance master, an honored artist of Azerbaijan, and artistic director of the acclaimed ethnographic ensemble called Eagles of Azerbaijan. He is considered to be the foremost master of the Azerbaijani dance practice.

Khanlar was born on March 22, 1957 in the city of Khanlar. Khanlar completed his educational studies in Baku and Moscow. He started dance at a very young age, and one of his first inspirations was his uncle, Rafiq Azizov, who was a famous professional dancer and actor.

Khanlar began working professionally as a dancer in 1974, and continued his studies at the dance department of the Baku Choreography School where he graduated in 1975. Throughout 1974 to 1977, he performed with the Azerbaijan State Song & Dance Ensemble throughout the former Soviet Union, Finland, Belgium, Austria, and various other countries to represent national and spiritual values of Azerbaijan through the art of dance. During the years of 1977 to 1979, he served in the military and performed as a soloist dancer in the Soviet Army Song & Dance Ensemble.

After completing military service in April 1979, he performed as solo dancer at the State song theater of Reshid Behbudov until 1986. Between 1982 to 1987 he was part of the Mirzaagha Art Institute of higher education, and from 1986 to 1996 Khanlar performed as a soloist with the Azerbaijan State Dance Ensemble.

In 1996, Khanlar retired as a solo dance artist. From 1998 and 2002, he served as artistic director of the Department of Culture in Baku working with the Jangi Dance Ensemble. And, from 1997 to 2012, he has worked as a dance professor at the Khazar University.

Khanlar has earned a honorable reputation, earning various awards throughout his career. He has performed on the road throughout 50 foreign countries, and propagates national and moral values through the art of dance. In 1991, he was awarded the title of Honored Artist in Azerbaijan, and in 2007, was awarded the Golden Buta, which is one of the highest national awards in Azerbaijan.

Khanlar founded the Azerbaijan Ehtnographic Ensemble called "Eagles of Azerbaijan" in November 2007 that auditions boys ages 6-16 who embark in a very serious and professional training program. Currently, the ensemble is one of the strongest in the region showcasing classic archival choreography of the late master Ali Baba Abdulayev, the father of Azerbaijani Dance.

TOURING HIGHLIGHTS

May 2010 - Belgium, Brussels

June 2010 - Luxembourg

June 2010 - Beringen

December 2012 - Luxembourg, Charity
hosted by Countess of Luxembourg

March 2013 - Strasbourg, organized by
Delegation of Azerbaijan

March, 2013 - Brussels, organized by
Delegation of Azerbaijan

May 2013 - Izmir, Turkey,
Language and Culture Festival

May 2013 - Istanbul, Turkey,
Republic Day of Azerbaijan

October 2013 - Mahachkala, Russia,
International Festival of National Dances





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MASTER CLASSES & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Eagles of Azerbaijan welcomes the opportunity to share about the culture and heritage of Azerbaijan by offering various master classes or outreach activities that include the following:

- The Pioneers of Dance in Azerbaijan - Alibaba Abdullayev School of Dance (lecture/demo/workshop)
- Circle Dances of Azerbaijan
- Martial Arts Dances of Azerbaijan and Caucasus
- Folklore Dances of Azerbaijan
- Music workshops introducing Azerbaijan instruments including the balaban, tar, kamancha, nagara and garmon

SELECT TOURING REPERTOIRE



YALLI ZORKHANA: History of the dance “Yalli” can be seen clearly from rock images in Gobustan, which date back 10-12 thousand years. Gemigaya, Nakhchivan. “Yalli” means row or chain line. Dancers stand in one or in a few lines. Before hunting, after hunting, before battle, after battle people danced Yalli around the fire to express their feelings through rhythms. There are more than 100 types of Yalli in Azerbaijan, each of them has special music and actions. Combining the new movements over time, Yalli dances have been modernized over time. In “Yalli Zorkhana,” we perform both the Yalli dance and the oldest sport Zorkhana which reveals developing muscles and bodies of wrestlers in reference their different weights, and preparation for sword battles.



SHAKI: Shaki is one of the oldest regions of Azerbaijan and has its own dance folklore. Reflecting on that ancient folklore we also added to our repertoire a “Shaki” dance. The dance is playful and fun with smooth rhythmical actions in the movements. The dance also showcases games “take a towel,” or “bone games” which reflect our national values. In general, this dance shows the nature, determination, and creativity of Azerbaijanians.

CHOBANLAR (Shepherds): Dance of the shepherds is a very popular repertoire piece as a result of its antiquity and unusual charm.

The piece showcases wonderful music abilities, bravery of shepherds, and rich/bright/sharp/technical actions of Azerbaijan national games. Poems of shepherds, which were played with pipes, were intended to create the proper conditions to comfort sheep for healthy eating and growth. Shepherd faces express different dangers like wild animals or bandits, and shepherds became war-like and brave from spending much time in the lap of nature. Shepherds used the cudgel made from solid wood and his dogs for weapons, and they would also often play manly



GAZAKHI: This dance is the characteristic of fighters with sharp movements showing discipline, order, and the beautiful figure of soldiers. There are two groups showcase the movements. At the end, one soloist comes to the stage and dances as "bey" dances with his serious movements, and then proceeds to test the two groups by a call and response sequence. Finally dancing all together, the dance is completed through playful, sharp, speedy, warrior-like movements.



IGIDLER: Igidler shows bellicosity, courage, and bravery. Two groups arrive on to the stage. The dance starts with one dancer from each group showing their heroism through technically difficult actions. Then, the two groups stand face to face and show their courage through movement. Finally, they begin individually dancing once again showing their technical skills with actions. The dance closes with a final synchronized group dance altogether.



SHALAQOY: Shala means "a bundle," and the direct meaning of this dance expresses "let's put our bundles down, and have fun." The work is set as a dance competition and playing of music of children who put their bundles down after they have come back from collecting firewood in the forest. This work also includes various solo performances.



SUITS OF AZERBAIJAN: There are five very interesting melodies included in this dance. Underlying each of the melodies and rhythms, the dancers individually show their wonderful acts of courage through technical movements. At the close of the work, the dancers dance under the Azerbaijan flag on their knees to showing their dedication to the nation's flag. Most often, the ensemble performs this at the end of concert in order that the dancers may leave the stage under a military-like music to say farewell to the audience members.





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