

Iranian dance history is characterized by many fascinating and also tragic incidents. It seems to be completely unknown to the outside world, partly because of the present political situation of the country that has toned down the interest for a profound research effort. The other reason is the current archaeological discoveries and excavations in Iran, during the past thirty years. They have made it possible to have access to material and evidence for the origin of Persian dance, ever since the appearance of the cult of Mithra about two thousand years before our calendar.

By virtue of these bases, Iran can be considered as one of the ancient world's empires, which methodically and actively was devoted to the development of the art of dance. For this ancient nation, dancing has been an important social phenomenon and a religious ritual.

It is the irony of history that ever since the revolution in 1979, this art form has been prohibited in the same country that once upon a time performed a central role for its expansion and advancement.

The several thousand years of Iranian history is characterized by great events that influenced important parts of the world and its civilization. It ranges over eras of grandeur but also over painful and absurd periods of defeat and destruction.

The following is a prelude to an exhaustive research work about the history of Persian dance, which I will become absorbed in during the coming years. I hope that it will improve in quality and content and will make a contribution to expose this national art form. The forgotten history of Persian dance is the story of a world heritage, which has to be given a new birth.

In this summary article I have chosen to spotlight seven different eras, from the prehistoric cult of Mithra until the present, which have included decisive events and episodes for developments, but also destructions of this art form. The rise of the new millennium undoubtedly implies a new productive period for Persian dance, as the Iranian society and the new generation of Iran move toward an era of enlightenment.

THE CULT OF MITHRA AND THE ORIGIN OF PERSIAN DANCE

The origin and rise of Persian dance as an independent and distinctive art form is estimated to be parallel with the birth of Mithraism and its spread. This cult centrally revolves around the ancient Persia's sun and light God, Mithra, who is the main figure in this mystery religion that during the late antique era spread over the entire Roman Empire. Numerous temples and depictions of the legendary Mithra have been located and excavated in the three continents of the ancient world; Asia, Africa and Europe. The latest discovery has been done in London as late as 1954.

The most important ritual in this cult has been the worship of Mithra, as he is sacrificing a bull. This act was believed to promote the vigour of life. The consecration to this belief was accomplished among other rites through the baptism in the blood of a bull, followed by a ritual dance performed only by men. This ceremonial act is considered as the earliest known form of Iranian dance, and the origin of the magic dance of the antique civilisations. It is typical for sacred Persic (Persian) dance, so called "Danse Persique Sacrée".

The most significant bases for researching around the ancient Persian dance can be found in the Greek historian from Halikarnassos, Herodotos' superb work "Nine Books". He describes the old history of Asian empires and Persian wars until 478 BC.

In several occasions he has indicated and in detail described the cultural and social habits of Persians. He has mentioned the wide cultural exchange that Persians had with the ancient world. "From every corner of the known (antique) world, the most appreciated artists were imported to the imperial court in order to practice their artistic abilities in the presence of the majestic Emperor and his court."

ACHAEMENIANS, AN ART PATRONIZING IMPERIAL DYNASTY

The cultural exchange with the ancient civilizations, particularly with Egypt and Greece has been extensive and proceeded during several centuries. In various works by Greek historians "Persian dance masters" (choreographers and pedagogues) have been mentioned as they have appeared in antique Greece, and Greek "sportsmen, poets and dancers" have been sent to the Persian Empire.

This cultural exchange has been described as one of the distinctive characteristics of ancient Persian culture, which gave rise to the term of "acculturation", meaning the acceptance of new cultures. This was an evident quality for the legitimation and survival of an empire that ruled over numerous nations, from

Egypt in North Africa, to India in Far East. It was the world's first religiously tolerant empire and consisted of a multitude of different languages, races, religions and cultures.

Achaemenians, the first ruling dynasty of the Persian Empire, contained several enthusiastic emperors who encouraged the advancement of different art forms. Ketzias, another Greek historian writes about the popular and talented female dancer, Zenon from Crete, who was Artaxerxes II's (Ardeshir Shah II) court dancer and "the apple of the King's eye".

Another Greek historian, Polukleitos, reports that at the marriage of Alexander the Great with the Persian woman "Roxana" in Susa, which continued in five days, he was amused by Greek musicians, singers and dancers who were engaged at the Persian Imperial Court.

Ketzias has specifically mentioned a sort of Persian dance, which was performed in connection with the ceremonies of Mithrakana (Mehrgan) in which even the King participated. "The King in India never appears if he is drunk. But unlike him in Persia, the Emperor drinks precious wine and devotes himself to the Persic dance during the ceremonies arranged in honor of Mithra". Douris from Samos reports about the same royal tradition: "Only in one occasion the King drinks wine and dances Persic dance and it is when worshipping Mithra."

Contemporary history writers of our time, such as the French historian and professor Pierre Briant, has convincingly certified in his master piece "L'Histoire de l'Empire Achemenid" that dancing has been an important part of the religious worship among Achaemenians and in the faith of Zoroastrianism (another Persian religion that is still practiced all over the world).

Professor Briant quotes Xenophon, the antique writer of the Cyropedie (a biographical depiction of the first Achaemenian Emperor's life, Cyrus the Great): "When Cyrus was devoted to the traditional sacrificing rituals in Pars (Persia) he commanded the Persians to perform a dance, which was influenced by the customs of their ancestors: Kata ta patria."

Xenophon emphasizes that this kind of Persic Dance (Danse Persique) has been very usual and as popular as "riding" because "Persic Dance, like a sport, strengthens the muscles"!

The importance of the art of dance among Persians can clearly be viewed relatively numerous Greek history books. Different forms of dance have existed as they were performed on ceremonial, ritual or entertaining occasions. "For acquainting their horses with the tumultous scenes of war, the Persians used to execute a "military dance", which meant that in a collective arrangement, clashing the weapons together rhythmically and dancing with their horses".

"... the man from Mysie performed a Persic dance by clashing his shields together, bending himself forward and rising up again. He did all that harmonically and proportionally to the rhythm of the flute."

Dancing was a well-developed and protected art form during the existence of other dynasties of Persian Empire, for instance Parthian and Sasanian. According to the Greek texts, there have been detailed descriptions for different forms of dancing, like fire dance, sword dance and even horse dance, which meant dancing while riding on horseback.

ISLAM FORBIDS DANCING

Dance as a respected social behavior and as a part of the Persian culture existed and was elaborated through millennia; alike the antique dance of China, Greece and India until the Arabs invaded Iran. Their new religion prohibited dancing, and this practically implied the extinction of the antique Persian dance traditions.

The English dance historian, Lilly Grove, writes in her book "Dancing" which was published in 1895: "Mohametan views concerning music and dancing have greatly narrowed the circle of amusements in Persia. Dancing girls were numerous at Court until the reigning family ascended the throne of Persia; but at present the dance is given up to women of low condition and of slack morality, or to young boys dressed as women."

Centuries of political instability, civil war and occupation by foreign powers, first Arabs and then Mongols resulted in a slow but steady disappearance of some Persian prehistoric heritage like the dance traditions.

Beside the religious prohibition, a historic tragedy and a national humiliation was the other important reason for Iranians, not to appreciate the art of dance for a long time to come. After the fall of Persian Empire, when the country was torn into pieces, Iranian women and young girls were slaved and soled in

the salve bazaars of the new conquerors. They were forced to sexual intercourse and to erotic dances for pleasing these uncivilized rulers.

One corrupted caliph, Harun ul-Rashid, had approximately three thousand musicians and dancers in his palace who were at his disposal, among them many Persians. This although dance and music was strictly forbidden according to the Islamic instructions. A particular Iranian family named as "Mowseli" has been mentioned as the responsible for the caliph's entertainment.

This historic shadow and national dishonor, for a people who were losing their cultural identity and human dignity, characterized their view of dance during centuries to come. No Iranian man wished to see his woman dancing in the presence of a stranger. This is why the attitude of Iranian Muslims toward dancing has been of a more conservative nature compared to other Muslim countries throughout the history.

SUFISM AND RISING OF SAMA' DANCE

By and by dancing appeared in the Persian mystic and Sufi faith. It took a central place in literature and was performed by religious men. Hafiz (d. 1388), Saadi (d. 1292) and Mevlana (d. 1273) were three great Persian poets who extolled dancing in their poems and used this art form as a symbol of the power of life. Sufism recommends dancing as a spiritual instrument to "become one with God", which is the final goal in this faith.

One of the great spiritual masters and poetic geniuses of Persian literature is Jalal ud-Din Rumi, known as Mevlana. He is the most appreciated Sufi of all times, who made dancing a central element in his Sufi doctrine. He was born in Balkh, in the province of Khorasan in the northeast of Iran and fled to the west, away from the invasion of Mongols in the 12th century. He finally resided in the city of Konya where his mausoleum is located today.

It was there he established and developed his order with strong portions of spiritism. Due to the Sufi instructions he stands in the middle point of this belief as the great Sheik, the "spiritual leader" in connection with the hidden, divine dimension and guides his followers "upwards" to the "Immortal".

The goal will be achieved by practicing a strong ecstatic ritual performed with music and dance as the central strain. This charismatic performance is called Sama' and represents a spiritual rapprochement to the "Creator" and is practiced until today.

Jean Börlin namely choreographed his ballet "Whirling Dervishes" for "Les Ballets Suédois" in 1920:s, inspired by this great Sufi faith and its ritual.

DANCE, A POPULAR ART IN QADJAR COURT

The only original form of Persian dance in its existing condition, which has survived throughout the centuries, is the folkloric dance of various Iranian focal groups and in particular the nomads. Few dance shows occurred in bigger cities and in public, not at least because of the religious belief and the Islamic prohibition in a strongly traditional, religious and undeveloped society.



But it was different in the royal court of the Qadjars. Old dance traditions can be found there, especially among Qadjar women, even if the art of dancing had no popularity among ordinary people.

However, the rise of the Qadjars in 1796 meant a liberalization of people's attitude toward dancing, although this art form remained in the monopoly of the royal court. There are illustrations such as both splendid paintings and texts in form of memoirs and official reports emphasizing the popularity of these dances in court and among the elite and bourgeois families.

Thus dancing became much in vogue and a social phenomenon, usually performed during diverse entertaining programs like coronations, marriage festivities and ceremonies of Norouz (the Iranian new year celebration).

In 1998 an art exhibition was arranged in the Brooklyn Museum in New York, USA, where paintings from the Qadjar era was shown. Some of these paintings portray dancing court women at festivities or professional female dancers who entertain the guests.



As mentioned, the Iranian folkloric dance was more developed outside the big cities. Lilly Grove, who I quoted earlier, has reported about a kind of a Tarantella looking dance, which existed in Buzabatt, near the city of Kashan and which looked similar to the Italian one in Sicily.

Further she writes, "In Persia the student of the history of the dance meets with the same difficulties in his investigations as he does in Scotland. The religion of the country has endeavored not only to suppress the pastime, but also to forbid any record of it."

Another English dance researcher, E. G. Browne, who traveled in Iran and studied the Persian dance in late nineteenth century, has mapped folk dances in the province of Khorasan and Kurdistan. "Yet in some remote provinces of Persia there are dances performed by peasants at night, and at Tehran itself Georgian girls are employed as dancers".

He speaks with admiration of the dancing boys of Persia; he praises their "elaborate posturing, which is usually more remarkable for acrobatic skill than for grace, at any rate according to western ideas."

Thanks to the care and efforts of some Iranian minority groups, such as Iranian Armenians and Jews, a fraction of what is called Persian dance has been saved throughout the history among ordinary people. Obviously, several Iranian artistic and cultural heritage including the art of dance would have been lost, if it was not for the devotion of these people.



We Persian Iranians owe a debt of gratitude to our minorities, who in some cases have lived in Iran for thousands of years, because our cultural heritage thus survived difficult times of turbulence and social decadence. Any tradition of Persian dance, which could have been saved, has been preserved through these minorities.

THE ERA OF PAHLAVI AND MODERNIZATION OF IRANIAN CULTURE AND ARTS

The rise of Pahlavi dynasty meant a methodical concentration on modernizing the country. During the years to come an accurate attempt was done in order to compile and develop different styles of dance.

From prehistoric folkloric dancing, which is left from the Persian original dance, to the contemporary works of the great western choreographers like Maurice Béjart and Martha Graham.

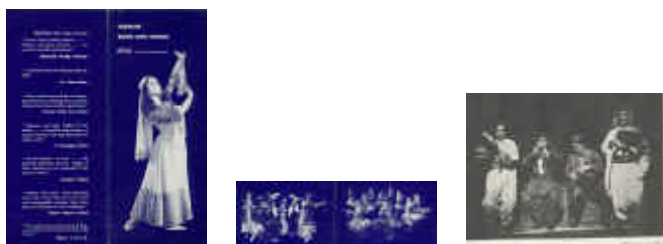
The history of Iranian ballet traditions starts from 1928, when Madame Cornelli gave her very first lessons in classical ballet until 1982 three years after the Islamic revolution. She and later other pedagogues such as Serkis Janbazian and [Madame Yelena](#), trained some children of the upper class in Tehran. These pedagogues, all of them with Armenian origin, have been educated abroad by European ballet masters. Later on, Madame Cornelli evolved her activity by touring with her ballet ensemble in different parts of the country and abroad.

Yelena Avedisian, known as Madame Yelena, immigrated to Iran in 1945. She moved to the city of Tabriz with her Iranian husband, where she shortly thereafter started her dance school. In 1962, she established the "Song and Dance Ensemble" with the participation of her 150 students. Later, when she moved to Tehran and established a new school, she made ballets of Persian character. "Rose of Shiraz", "Song of the Canary", "Gulnara", "Portrait of a Patriotic Girl", "Fire Dance", and "Fountains at the Ferdowsi Square" are some of them.

During the 1930:s, 1940:s and 1950:s a new kind of entertaining dance was developed. It had its roots in Qadjar dance traditions and became known as popular dance, or in the term of our time disco dance. It was performed by ordinary people and aimed only as entertainment at private gatherings and festivities. This kind of dance did not have any artistic quality, but it became more and more popular and new stiles were developed. *Motrebi*, *Ru-hawzi*, *Baba Karam*, *Shateri* and *Tehrooni* were performed by people, even as solo dances!

In early 1940:s the first known Iranian dance ensemble with a professional character was formed, called "Revival of Ancient Iranian Arts". For the first time, in 1947, the company was introduced abroad touring in Turkey, Greece, Italy and Lebanon. Later, between 1951 and 1953 performances were given in India and all the Middle Eastern countries.

The Iranian group of "National Folkloric Music, Song and Dance" was formed in 1958 by the Ministry of Culture and Arts under the direction of Nejad Ahmadzadeh. The goal was to revive, restore and develop all kind of national and folkloric music, song and dance.



Groups of experts were sent to villages and far-fetched provinces of Iran to gather material and to make an in depth study of these art forms. The company performed in the presence of all the state guests of Iran including many royal families and presidents of the East and the West such as the Queen of England, King Hassan II of Morocco, Presidents De Gaule of France, Yahya Khan of Pakistan, Chaussecso of Romania, Nixon of USA, etc.

In 1959, the ensemble participated in the International Folk Dance Festival in Turkey, being its first international introduction. Later in 1964 the troupe made a long tour in the Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Morocco, the USSR and almost all East European countries. It gave also a week of performances at the Iranian pavilion in Canada at Expo 1967 and Expo 1970 in Japan . During 1968-69 the ensemble made another extensive tour in the USSR, Afghanistan and Tunisia.

More and more dancing became accepted in the traditional Iranian society and thanks to the devoted work of some Iranian enthusiasts it was developing to a popular form of art. Nejad Ahmadzadeh says: "Dance used to be a lowly means of entertainment in Iranian culture. During my career we placed it on the cultural map of Persia as an art form, where it belonged".

During the 1950:s some initiatives have been taken also for establishing a government supported and well organized ballet ensemble at a national level. The Ministry of Culture and Arts invited some ballet masters and choreographers from Europe and the United States to come to Iran and together with the Iranian ballet veterans start a national ballet company.

Nejad Ahmadzadeh was sent by the Ministry to the United States to visit and study different opera houses and concert halls. At his return he established the technical, administrative and artistic sections of

the newly built "Roudaki Hall Opera House". During the same time also a state supported Ballet School was formed for which ballets teachers were engaged from abroad.



On the invitation of the ministry, Dame Ninette de Valois went to Tehran in 1958 to establish the classical ballet company to which she then sent Ann Cock, Nicholas Beriozoff, Miro Zolan, his wife Sandra Vane and Marion English (Delanian) to teach and stage ballet productions.

In 1966 Robert de Warren was appointed artistic director of the National Company, which performs at "Roudaki Hall Opera House" in Tehran, and the "Iranian National Ballet" was formally founded in 1967 by Nejad Ahmadzadeh at the time of coronation festivities in Tehran. For this occasion many respected artists such as Hehudi Menuhin, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf and ensembles including Grands Ballets Classiques de France, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Symphony Orchestra, ... visited Tehran and the Roudaki Hall.

When de Warren left the ballet company in 1971 to study national folk dances and later form the "Mahalli Troupe of Iranian Folk Dancers", the first Iranian prima ballerina Aida Ahmadzadeh (the wife of the founder of Roudaki Hall) succeeded him as director.



Later guest producers included William Dollar, Ivon Pattersen, Anne Heaton, Vakhtang M. Chaboukiani and others. A varied repertoire was created and the Ministry of Culture and Arts partially sponsored the company. Collaboration with American and European dance establishments in cities such as New York, Paris, London and Brussels started.



In 1969 Rudolf Nurejev and Margot Fonteyn visited Iran and set up the ballet of Le Corsaire on the national scene. During the same year an Iranian ballet dancer, Bijan Kalantari, graduated from the School of Metropolitan Opera and Ballet came to Iran. His collaboration with the national ballet company resulted in arrangement of a gala evening with the participation of some Iranian ballet dancers and their partners, active in Europe and the USA, Haydeh Changizian and Ali Pourfarroukh.



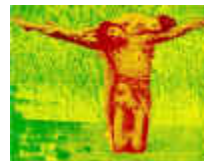
In autumn 1969, Bijan Kalantari established a new ballet department at the Tehran's Music High School, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Arts. His intention was to educate dancers with different styles for the National Ballet.



Kalantari, who had collaborated with successful choreographers like Serge Lifar, is considered as the person who imported the modern pedagogic system for classical ballet to Iran. Before moving to his native country, he had worked with ballet companies such as the Dallas, Kansas and Vienna Operas, as well as the Metropolitan Opera and Ballet.



The National Company grew steadily from approximately a dozen to 46 dancers, one third of them Iranians. It became an internationally known ballet ensemble and toured the world. The young company was soon notorious as the best and the most respected of all ballet companies in the Middle East. It became most known among companies of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Egypt etc. Membership of the company became popular and attractive by first class dancers all over the world. Many foreign ballet stars and prima ballerinas, for instance from the Bolshoi Ballet, were invited to dance at the premiers.



Haydeh Changizian, who was educated from the Ballet School of Madame Yelena, later Institute Für Bühnen Tanz in Köln and the Ballet School of Kirov Opera in Leningrad, USSR, was invited by the Ministry of Culture and Arts to permanently join the National Company. At that time she was engaged with the Frankfurt Opera Ballet. The Ministry was determined to encourage the Iranian ballet artists who were engaged abroad, to return to their homeland.

Thus Haydeh Changizian was appointed as the prima ballerina of the Iranian National Ballet in 1972. Among her best interpretations are ballets from the classical repertoire such as Giselle, and Zarema in the Fountain of Bakhchesarai.



The repertoire of the company consisted of both classical and contemporary ballets. New versions of old classics were presented, like the Persian history of "Scheherezadeh" (Shahrazad), choreographed by Ann Heaton after Fokin. New creations of a more national character were also made. In 1971, Robert Thomas created the modern ballet "Myth of the Creation". "Bijan and Manijeh", a classical ballet choreographed by Aida Ahmadzadeh, had its premier in 1976. Iranian musicians composed the music of these ballets.

Ali Pourfarroukh succeeded Aida Ahmadzadeh as the artistic director of the company in 1976. Two years later in 1978, Haydeh Changizian left the ensemble after many disputes with the new direction to established her own organization "Haydeh Changizian Ballet Institute" including a ballet school and a dance company. The institute was inaugurated under the protection of the "Niyavaran Cultural Center" which contributed to the flourishing of many cultural events in the country. Soon Haydeh Changizian started collaboration with the "Royal Academy of Dance" in England and its Artistic Director, Sir John Field.

She aimed to create a new repertoire that characterized and was influenced by Persian mythology and literature. Assisted by the Royal Academy of Dance, an audition was arranged in London and some dancers were even selected for the company. But her project had to be put down because of the new political circumstances in the country.



The 1970:s is a very important and significant decade for the development of the Iranian dance traditions. The art of dance became more and more recognized and practiced by ordinary enthusiasts among the people. The monopoly of this art form for the upper class was broken and it spread out into different classes of the Iranian society.

Successful Iranian composers contributed to the popularization of dance. Melik Aslanian created the music of "The Myth of the Creation" (choreographed by Rober Thomas). Aminollah (André) Hossein (father of the French actor, Robert Hossein) composed several symphonies among them, "Persian Miniature", "I Love My Country", Symphony Persepolis" and "Scheherezadeh" (Shahrazad), which was choreographed by George Skibine, one of Diaghilev's dancers.

During this period the international mega stars of the art of ballet very often visited the national scene. Maurice Béjart, Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham and Birgit Cullberg were some of them.



Thus the Iranian national scene developed to a prestigious center for this art form in the Middle East. Great choreographers were inspired for creating works with Persian character. Maurice Béjart choreographed "Farah" and "Golestan", which made the art of ballet popular among Iranians and at the same time spotlighted the Persian culture in the west.



Other domestic companies also flourished with varied quality and directions. One of these was "Pars National Ballet", established by Abdollah Nazemi. This company produced many ballet films and often performed in the Iranian National Television.

ISLAMIC REVOLUTION: DANCE, A GREAT SIN AND BANNED

The Islamic revolution of 1979 implied the end of a successful era for dancing and the art of ballet in Iran. The result of many decades of toil and passionate work was lost when the fundamentalists came into power. The national ballet company was dissolved and its members emigrated to different countries.

According to the principles of "cultural revolution" dancing was considered to be perverse, a great sin, immoral and corrupting. Consequently, the last signs of dancing disappeared in the same country that during thousands of years did great contributions to this art form and had it as a respected court ceremony.

The revolution has moreover resulted in the biggest emigration of Iranians from their native country, in its thousands years of existing history. Today the Iranian Diaspora reaches out to the entire world. A great number of the country's intellectuals, artists, writers, scientists, politicians and other categories of society have chosen to leave the country and to live in exile.

Also many profiles of the Iranian ballet moved to the west and spread out mainly in Europe and the United States. Some of them were employed in European and American theatres and Opera Houses. Others like Haydeh Changizian left their careers for all future. She arranged in 1980, a ballet concert evening "In Memory of Roudaki Hall" in California as her last appearance on stage and left the profession ever since.

The last artistic director of the National Company, Ali Pourfarroukh, was engaged after the revolution in Essen, Germany as ballet master. Later he became the artistic director of the "Dance Theatre of Long Island" in the USA and "Alberta Ballet" in Canada. Lotfi Mansouri was general director of San Francisco Opera until 2001 for almost two decades.

Fortunately, the oblivion of the art of dance during the two latest decades did not mean the end of this Persian heritage forever. A new generation of Iranian ballet artists has grown up in the Diaspora. Many young Iranians became interested in ballet in exile, and educated themselves to talented ballet dancers, even choreographers.

Some of these compatriots are: Afshin Mofid and Maryam Mahdavian in New York City Ballet, Shirin Kiani in Santa Barbara Ballet, Susanne and Fariba Arbabzadeh in Netherlands National Ballet, Media Mahdavi, Farah Khosravi, Shahrzad Khorsandi and others. The successful Iranian choreographer, Amir Hosseinpour, has created several works for Paris Opera, Royal Ballet in London, La Scala in Italy and Bayerische Staatsoper in Germany etc.

There are also some Iranian dance groups that have been established abroad since 20 years, all of them with a folkloric character and privately financed. The consequence of the difficult economics has sadly been the loss of quality and a commercializing of the art. One exception is the efforts of the American dance researcher and connoisseur, Dr. Anthony Shay. He is one of the experts of Persian folkloric dance and has made several productions in his "Avaz International Dance Theatre" in the USA.

Dance as an art form has been banned since the revolution in Iran. However, the character of dance as a human phenomenon has anyway made it to not disappear completely from society. Despite the prohibition, it has been performed in private gatherings even if its discovery in most cases has resulted in punishment of the aspirant.

The attempts of reforms during the past few years have made, periodically, few liberalizations in the Iranian society. Teaching of dance has been occasionally allowed to women and only by women. No man is allowed to practice or to even watch when the opposite sex is exercising.

For the first time since 20 years, an Iranian magazine "Iran-e Javan" (The Young Iran) has published [an article](#) in March 2000, which very carefully discusses the issue of dance and the need of this artistic

expression in the society. The writer openly tried to refer to religious verdicts in order to legalize dancing. The headline was: Oak, I desire a dance among people in the middle of the square!

The story of the Iranian dance may be a sad history, but it is definitely not a closed chapter. The new generation of Iran, who claims a better future for herself and her motherland, will soon be taking care of and exploit this Persian heritage that has survived several foreign occupations, devastations and intolerances throughout history. This new generation has through her untiring striving and fight for freedom proved, that Iran deserves a better place in the international society. A position that it's several thousand years of culture and civilization justifies.

The foundation of [Les Ballets Persans](#) , as the successor company of the former Iranian National Ballet was established in 2001 in Sweden. The company, known even as the New Iranian National Ballet had its World Premiere Gala Performance at Royal Cirkus Hall on October 7th, 2002, in Stockholm.

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