

London Keyhan, no 1387

Excerpts from an Interview with Jamil Kharrazi, founder and director of the Toos Foundation

[Translation from Persian]

Toos Event: Love Came and set the world on Fire!

20th November 2011, Logan Hall, London



Q: What is the position of your latest event in relation to Toos Foundation's aims and your previous programs?

A: From our first event in celebration of Lobat Vala to our latest in search of the real meaning of Iranian mysticism we have always followed one objective. To showcase aspects of our rich cultural history. There are plenty of stars to pick in the vast sky of Iranian culture.

Over the last few years there has been a lot of interest about Iranian mysticism both inside Iran and abroad. Many events have been staged on this topic everywhere. We felt, however, despite the vast interest the content of most programs did not do justice to the complex issue of Iranian mysticism

with its rich history and its many thinkers. I myself felt that we need to do some serious research to shed light on the historical roots of this phenomenon. We researched for two years before presenting this program.

Q: After a Toos event how do you assess its effects and what you have passed on to the participants?

A: We collect all views expressed by phone, email or post. And we always learn from them for the next event. One criticism which has always been raised is the size of the Logan Hall. Unfortunately given limited resources we cannot at present stage our events in larger and more professionally suited halls. As for the views of participants we can immediately see the interest after the event by the increased number of visitors to our site. We hope to expand the site in future and provide a lot more Iranian cultural and historical content to those interested in studying it.

We also film all our events and create a DVD of the entire event which people can obtain and also place highlights and other clips both on our own site and on public sites like YouTube.

Q: With all this work is it right to have just one performance in London and in a hall with just 900 capacity? Have you made any decisions on staging your events in other cities and countries? And finally how can you provide a wider access to videos of these events?

A: It is really difficult to organise such events in unfamiliar places. Even in London it took us a lot of effort to gather the dance group together, let alone if we had to take them to different cities. Instead of repeating live performances we must distribute the recordings to a much wider audience through the media. Unfortunately not all are interested. In London alone we have a number of professional papers and TV channels. They however seem to be more interested in instantaneous amusement rather than serious content. There are a both in Europe and USA few who have always supported us and tried to do what they can in publicising our foundation and its events.

Q: As a producer and artistic director of the program can you tell me which section appealed to you most?

A: It is like asking a mother which of her children she loves most! I cannot prefer any section to others but given my background I am probably closer to the dance section. Believe me when I say I have daily lived and breathed these dances more than the dancers themselves. Audience's appreciation is our encouragement.

Q: In some Toos events Ostad Elahi's name has been mentioned. Does this mean he has been helping the foundation with his views and research?

A: Unfortunately in our own research we have not managed to reach the heights reached by Ostad. Although we have always enjoyed his moral support we have not had the pleasure of his direct involvement. I do, however, have a deep personal debt to Ostad Elahi. Alongside Sohrab Sepehri, they have deeply influenced me throughout my life.

Q: Thank you for your time.