

M. H. Akmal plays the sitar and is originally from Bangladesh. Inspired by his mother, Akmal began preliminary training at home under Ustad Israel Miah. He then studied with a disciple of the famous Sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. Akmal won numerous awards in music competitions in Bangladesh, and performed regularly on Radio Bangladesh. He has performed extensively in and out of Atlanta. He has published a book of poetry in Bengali, acts in Bengali plays, is on the executive committee of the Bangladesh Association of Georgia,

Julie Baggenstoss is a flamenco dancer and instructor who teaches dance in metro Atlanta. Julie has studied dance for over 25 years, with training in ballet, tap, jazz and precision dance. She added flamenco to her repertoire in 1997, under the instruction of Teresa Romero Torkanowsky in New Orleans. Julie continued her flamenco training under Ulrika Frank in Atlanta, and at the Manuel Betanzos flamenco academy in Seville, Spain. Julie is a former instructor of children and adults at the Atlanta Ballet.

Jill Davies started taking dance classes at the age of 3. Over the years she took classes in tap, ballet, jazz, and baton. She was selected to be the choreographer for Kutztown University's production of Sweet Charity. She is currently a Director of Mainstream Dance and is a paraprofessional at West Newton Elementary School.

Ilker Capoglu attended various Youth Choirs and semi-professional voice ensembles, and participated in important local and international musical activities including the 1994 Aspendos Music Festival, and the 2002 Gorizia (Italy) Choral Contest. He started taking classical guitar lessons at age 15. His interest in "baglama" and "oud", traditional stringed Turkish instruments, started at age 19. After years of joyful and intense study, this interest gradually extended beyond merely a personal curiosity, and materialized into countless performances.

Chantelle is trained in both modern and Arabic dance. She has dedicated her life to studying the dance of various cultures of the world.

Diane Adams, Director of Company Mezza, is a 25+ year veteran dancer/instructor. Her background in ballet and folkloric dance in the western New York area, have allowed her to offer a wide range of Middle Eastern dance styles from classic Egyptian to Gypsy. She is choreographer for Troupe Zeina, Zingari, and Company Mezza. In 2003, she worked in concert with critically acclaimed Yasmina Ramzy of Toronto, Canada, in recreating Yasmina's dance, "Venus" from the Descent of Ishtar Ballet, for Company Mezza.

Jerry Fields is the Music Director of the Afro-Cuban jazz group Vecinos Del Mundo (Neighbors of the World). is a Summit Jazz recording artist performing on drumset as a member of the Ted Howe Trio. A passion for "world music" currently affords Mr. Fields the opportunity to perform regularly with Kleezmer, Flamenco, and Greek ensembles both locally and regionally. Jerry has also studied North Indian tabla with Badal Roy, Radhe Shyam Sharma, and Alope Dutta.

Rai Gnawa The music of the Atlanta based band, Rai Gnawa, is a powerful mixture of the "Gnawa" style, a traditional and mystical style of North African Arabic music that often times has a religious content with African rhythms, and the "Rai" style of music, a more recent style that emerged in Oran, Algeria amongst young artists around the turn of the century replete with elements of Gnawa and even American Blues, Jazz and Rock. The members of Rai Gnawa are all from North Africa, and their feelings towards art, peace, God and life in general are naturally expressed through these two styles of music known to them since childhood in Algeria and Morocco.

Padmaja Kelam is a virtuoso in the ancient classical dance form of Bharata Natyam. Padmaja is one of the founders and artistic directors of Kalaivani dance and music academy. She had her training in Pandanallur tradition from Guru smt. Rajeswari sainath and Sri. Pasumarthy Ramalinga Shastry of kalashetra. She has performed widely through out India and the U.S. She received her masters of performing arts from the Central University, Hyderabad, India and has trained students in Bharata natyam for the past 14 years, She has 5 dance studios in Georgia.

Bruce Lebovitz is a professional musician and classically trained violinist. He is a member of Atlanta Gamelan Orchestra and has played blue grass, jazz, and Middle Eastern music. He performed a violin solo at "The Asian Cultural Experience" in July of this year at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens,

Dr. Shekhar Pendalwar has performed on All India Radio. He has been a regular performer at the Festival of India celebration at Gwinnett and Atlanta Civic Center. He has recently performed at an International symposium at University of Georgia. He has accompanied many noted artists from India. Dr. Shekhar was past president of Indian Classical Music Society of greater Atlanta and is very active in promoting Indian classical music in the community

Jaime Robtison trained and danced with the Southwest Virginia Ballet where she performed various principal roles such as the Snow Maiden, Coppelia, Paquita, and Ballade. Her professional performing career includes dancing with the Atlanta Ballet, Richmond Ballet, PA Academy of Ballet, Dance Alive Touring Company, and Pulcinella with the Roanoke Opera. Jaime is a Founder and Director of Mainstream Dance, the Artistic Director for the Covington Regional Ballet, and instructor for the Atlanta Ballet. Her students are performing tonight. She choreographed "Ballerinas"

Rouzbeh At the age of 13 Rouzbeh older brother was given a guitar as a gift. He showed little interest in the instrument, and Rouzbeh would quietly sneak it away when the opportunities were available, teaching himself how to play. Rouzbeh plays flamenco guitar finger-style, universally recognized as the most difficult and entertaining method of playing. Audiences are mesmerized by not only the beautiful music, but by the flashing hands and precise finger-work that is the hallmark of his style.

Amitava Sen, the violinist is originally from Calcutta, India. He graduated from IIT, Kharagpur. He has won several awards for his performances and was founding member of Indian classical music society at Indian Institute of Sciences at Bangalore. He studied with virtuoso violinist Yosef Yankelev at Emory University, where he also completed his MBA. He has performed and composed music in a variety of styles, blending Indian with Chinese, middle-eastern, and western instruments.

Danny Stern's life has become an endless search for new sounds and rhythms. Known predominately as a percussionist, Danny is also co-owner of Acoustech Music in Atlanta, Georgia. He teaches a Meditative Movement workshop, where you can experience the spiritual and healing powers he's found in rhythm for yourself. Danny has studied for the last 12 years under sufi master Adnan Sarhan, a member of five sufi orders and founder and director of the Sufi Foundation of America Center

Val (Vilia), originally from England, is a performer of international recognition who began her career in Middle Eastern dance in the '70s in the United States. In addition to performing for foreign dignitaries, and with notable Middle Eastern musicians in many different venues, she has been a long-time instructor of the dance. Her specialty of American Cabaret styling has pleased many an audience at home and abroad.

Christine Zaarour's dance career began at the age of six when she began performing in television commercials. She directed and choreographed children's dances and activities on a weekly program called Noah's Ark. She performed for Caracalla Dance Theatre of Lebanon, and has risen to international standards touring and performing world wide. She has trained extensively in Classical Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Flamenco, Middle Eastern Dance

Zadya has been a devoted student of Middle Eastern dance, Tai Chi, and a member of Company Mezza for several years. She performed in the Yasmina Ramzy "Venus" dance from the Descent of Ishtar Ballet for which Company Mezza was granted performing rights, and she recently performed in Elena Lentini's review in NYC.