



Kan Zaman Community Ensemble performance at the Caltech Auditorium in Pasadena, Wael Kakish conducting

Kan Zaman Magic Carpet Voyage

Classic Arabic Spring Concert

The Kan Zaman Community Ensemble held its 1998 Spring Concert on June 20 at Caltech's Beckman Auditorium in Pasadena, California, to an enthusiastic audience. The Southern-California based non-profit organization performs classical and folk Arabic music typically in large yearly concerts and occasionally participates in additional smaller performances sponsored by educational, cultural, or civic groups. For the past four years, Kan Zaman has been educating the community about classical and folk Arab arts through live shows that have attracted large audiences of various backgrounds; this has earned it several awards from local organizations.

Introduced by remarks from magazine publisher William Ghazarian, the concert featured the largest number of solo performances by members of the group. The chorus started with two *muwashahat* (sung poetry in the tradition of the Arabs of Andalusia) and accompanied soloist Sam Masoudi, who is known for his captivating *mawwal* vocal improvisation, in two more. They also sang a Sayyed Darwish taqtuqa called *Ya ward 'ala fulli wa yasmeen* and two Umm Kulthum's songs, *Darit al-Ayyam*

(introduction) and *Ha'ablu Bukra*. The program also featured an instrumental composition for Mohammad Abdulwahab, *Khatwet Habibi*, and interspersed *taqasim* (instrumental improvisations) by several musicians throughout the concert.

What distinguished this concert from other Kan Zaman shows were the five solo singers in the second half, showing the rich depth of talent from within the group. First time soloist Michel Bilal sang the Lebanese singer Wadie al-Safi's song '*Alallah T'oud* with tremendous expression and moving interpretation. Also a first time soloist, Adel Mansour delightfully sang the Egyptian song *Gamil wa Asmar*. Repeat soloists Ban Aziz, who sang Shadia's *En Rah Minek ya 'Ain* and Abdallah Hourany who sang Asmanhan's *Al-Ward* were again well received by the audience who joined in at will. This program led up to a grand finale by the group's most popular solo singer and 'ud player, Yervand Khamtrashyan, who sang Farid al-Atrash's song *Busatil Reeh*, a conceptual trip on a magic carpet sampling music from various regions of the Arab world. Khamtrashyan has made it a tradition to sing a song for the late

Druze singer and romantic movie star Farid and gets repeated calls for encores from his fans and regular followers.

In a segment called community talent encouragement, the ensemble introduced two children who played the piano. Mansour and Hanan Jammal, the 13 and 11-year old children of actor George Jammal, performed four pieces from Egypt and Lebanon on the piano accompanied by Kan Zaman's first violinist George Hamad and new cello player Khaled Khalife.

The ensemble's president, Sami Asmar, communicated the ensemble's goals summarized its accomplishments, reflecting a prestigious level of the group's management style. He spoke about the beauty of Arabic poetry and classical music and gave a brief introduction to the concept of Arabic music *maqam* (modal structure) and rhythmic patterns, an educational segment that was highly appreciated by Arabs and non-Arabs alike. Conducted by the talented Artistic Director Wael Kakish, the concert cemented Kan Zaman's role in the local music scene and impressed all present with the talent of this collection of volunteers.