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Butterfly Buzz & Shari Rezai Present:

NIYAZ
@ El Rey Theatre
Saturday, February 7, 2009

5515 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

\$30-60 / 18+ / Show: 9 PM / (323) 936-6400

www.sixdegreesrecords.com / www.niyazmusic.com / www.theelrey.com / www.butterflybuzz.comFor tickets and information visit: www.radiojavan.com/NIYAZ

On **February 7**, the Persian electro-acoustic sensation **Niyaz** does a hometown record release party in Los Angeles at the **El Rey Theatre** in support of their critically acclaimed sophomore album, **Nine Heavens**. The album has been resonating across a wide spectrum of fans worldwide from the younger Persian generation to their parents, to Western ears and more. No wonder why the album continues to receive press accolades with a recent feature on **NPR's Weekend Edition**. The album has also hit impressive chart numbers including **#1** on iTunes "world chart," **#1** on the "world music radio charts" in Europe, and **#4** on **Billboard's "world music chart."**

Niyaz's 2005 debut album featured a convincing blend of Sufi poetry and trance electronica, and quickly established them as a standout ensemble in a very crowded world music field. Since then Niyaz have become international touring artists performing all over the world from Canada, the United States, Europe to the Middle East. Known for their highly dynamic live performances, which features additional musicians from various backgrounds, Niyaz presents audiences with a sophisticated blend of superb musicianship and subtle electronica.

Now, Niyaz returns with *Nine Heavens*, which doesn't just cross cultural and stylistic boundaries, but the centuries as well. Drawing on medieval Persian poetry and 300-year old Persian folk songs, Niyaz has created a 21st century global trance tradition. This may seem like a tall order for a band that's barely three years old – until you realize who these musicians are. Vocalist **Azam Ali** co-founded the best-selling world music duo Vas in 1996; her unmistakable voice has graced numerous recordings and major film scores. **Loga Ramin Torkian** is a multi-instrumentalist whose group Axiom of Choice brought the ancient sounds of Persian classical music to Western listeners in the 1990s. And **Carmen Rizzo**, a multiple Grammy nominee, who is co-producer in Niyaz along with Azam and Loga, and has worked with Coldplay, Seal, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and many others. Small wonder then that the trio hit the ground running with its self-titled debut. Now, with *Nine Heavens*, Niyaz breaks new ground in a two-disc format: the first is an adventurous, spiritual exploration of the ties that bind Persian, Indian, Turkish, and Western dance music. The second disc showcases 8 out of the 9 songs in a purely acoustic setting.

On tour Niyaz consists of vocalist **Azam Ali**, multi-instrumentalist **Loga Ramin Torkian**, oud virtuoso **Naser Musa**, tabla player **Salar Nader**, double bassist **Miles Jay**, and **Ray Lee** on keyboards and programming. Niyaz's live show is a celebration of cultural and spiritual differences, which has not only united these talented musicians, but also their audiences worldwide. Don't miss this opportunity to see a group forging a new musical path when Niyaz comes to perform at the El Rey Theatre in Los Angeles on February 7th.

Full touring ensemble biography below.

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Niyaz Ensemble – Individual Biographies

Azam Ali

Iranian born, Indian raised **Azam Ali** is internationally recognized for her work with Niyaz and Vas, two of the best-selling and critically acclaimed world music ensembles she co-founded. In a career which spans over a decade and includes nine collaborative and solo albums, Azam Ali has confirmed her place as one of the most prolific, versatile, and gifted singers on the world music stage today. *Billboard* magazine has described her voice as, "a glorious, unforgettable instrument." Azam's dedication to defy cultural specificity in music and her unwillingness to settle into one form of musical expression have earned her both the respect of her peers as well as much critical acclaim. Her immense talent and ability to adapt her voice to any musical style have drawn the attention of many diverse artists and film composers. Azam has collaborated in studio and on stage with numerous artists like **Serj Tankian** of **System of a Down**, **The Crystal Method**, **Pat Mastellato** and **Trey Gunn** of **King Crimson**, **Dredg**, **Chris Vrenna** formerly of **Nine Inch Nails**, **Ben Watkins** of **Juno Reactor**, **Buckethead**, **Steve Stevens**, **Mercan Dede**, the world renowned Japanese group **Kodo**, **Zakir Hussain**, **Omar Faruk Tekbilek**, and **Mickey Hart**. Aside from her solo and collaborative projects, Azam has also built an impressive resume singing on several major film scores including "*The Matrix: Revolutions*", "*Godsend*", "*The Nativity Story*", "*Speed Racer*", "*Paparazzi*", "*Children of Dune*" and on hit TV shows such as "*Alias*" and "*Prison Break*".

Loga Ramin Torkian

Iranian born **Loga Ramin Torkian** has won much recognition in his native Iran as well as in the west as the composer and multi-instrumentalist for the World Music group Axiom of Choice whose music is deeply rooted in the traditional music of Iran. Currently based in America Loga is now recognized worldwide for his work with Niyaz, the ground breaking World Music ensemble he co-founded in 2005. Although Torkian is a highly accomplished on many instruments such as the Guitar, Lafta, Djura etc., his main instruments are the Turkish Saz which is from the family of lutes, the Kamman, a bowed instrument specifically designed for Loga, and the electric Guitar Viol, a bowed guitar inspired by a 14th century instrument. Loga is one of the few musicians who performs the Guitar Viol live. With its haunting sound that mesmerizes audiences, what makes Loga's style so singular is the fact that he applies Persian traditional bowing techniques and melodies to his playing. A highly gifted and talented composer, Loga is greatly respected for his ability to adapt the Persian classical repertoire, known as Radif, into his own unique and modern compositions. His profound artistry has been featured in several major motion picture soundtracks, which include "Iron Man" and "Body of Lies".

Described by the Beirut Times as "one of the most versatile vocalists and Oud masters of the Middle East" **Naser Musa** stands today at the forefront of Middle Eastern music as an undeniable Oud virtuoso, a gifted songwriter/composer and a singer with a profoundly soothing voice that can assuage even the most tormented of hearts. An active and sought after musician, Naser has performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, The Hollywood Bowl, the United Nations and Chicago's Symphony Hall. He has recorded with many big name artists such as Shakira, Beyonce, Michael Sembello, Youssou N'Dour, Fathy Salama and Dr. A. J. Racy among others. He has also been featured on several major motion picture soundtracks which include the Grammy award winning "The Passion of the Christ", and most recently "Body of Lies". On his own Naser Musa has composed, arranged, and recorded numerous projects in the Middle East and in the United States among which include the highly successful "Khaliji" and "Christmas and Beyond".

Salar Nader

Salar Nader is one of the youngest and most talked about Tabla players in recent times. A student of world-renowned Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain, Salar's natural magnetism and innovative approach to this traditional instrument have made him one of Hussain's most promising protégés. Of Afghan descent, Salar was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1981 and migrated to America at the age of three where he began his studies with Ustad Zakir Hussain. Today, Salar is the preferred accompanist for many of India's, Afghanistan's, and Pakistan's most renowned classical musicians and dancers. He has performed with Ustad Salamat Ali Khan, Ustad Mawaash, Rahul Sharma, Ahmad Wali, Homayun Sakhi, Fareed Haque Group, Ustad Shujaat Khan, Ustad Rashid Khan, Kala Ramnath, Ghulam Ali Khan and Riffat Sultana. He has also performed with ensembles such as the Rumi Ensemble (Shahram Nazeri and Hafez Nazeri), Ruminations (Farzin Farhadi, Cheb I Sabbah). Not yet 30 years of age, Salar Nader is already an exceptional musician, composer, teacher, and performer. It is safe to say that he is destined to be one of the top artists of his time.

Miles Jay

At 27 years of age, **Miles Jay** is the most sought after double bassist in the World Music scene today. A graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara with a BA in Ethnomusicology combined with a strong foundation in Jazz and Classical music, Miles has soon built an impressive resume for himself touring all over the world from Cairo to Oslo, Dubai to Dakar, Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, Beirut and Damascus. His versatility and experience in the musical traditions of the Middle East have earned him a spot performing with some of the biggest names in World Music today which include Youssou N'Dour, Fathy Salama, Naser Shamma (Iraq), the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, Ross Daly (Greece), Georges Lammam, Trygve Seim (Norway), Omar Faruk Tekbilek, The Alexandria Chamber Orchestra and Dr. Ali Jihad Racy. In 2006, while living in Cairo for two years after graduating, Miles co-founded, co-produced, and recorded two unique original music ensembles called Bakash and Masar. He has also been increasingly active in various production roles as in 2005 when he was the Associate Musical Director / Contractor / Bassist for Youssou N'Dour's US Grammy tour. Miles' talent and innate approach to World Music has added a wonderful new dimension to Niyaz' music, making him a great new addition to this unique ensemble.