

October 28, 2012

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Siavash Shams Splendid in His Musical Debut, “Loving the Silent Tears” Star-Studded Benefit Show with Message of Peace

Siavash Shams shone brightly on stage as he took his bows in front of a full-capacity Shrine Auditorium of over 6,000 people on October 27. He was the sole representative of Iranian culture in the benefit show, a Broadway-style musical directed by Tony-nominated **Vincent Paterson** (Michael Jackson’s “Bad” and Madonna’s “Blond Ambition” world tours) and choreographed by Emmy-winning **Bonnie Story** (“High School Musical”).

Like all the stars in “Loving the Silent Tears,” including 2-time Grammy winner **Jon Secada** and Grammy winner **Jody Watley**, as well as Tony-winning Broadway stars and accomplished international singers, Siavash said he felt honored to work with such a distinguished cast and creative team. All the songs he sang were composed by Oscar, Tony, Grammy or Emmy Award winners respected in Broadway and Hollywood. The lyrics were based on the poetry collection, “Silent Tears,” written by **Supreme Master Ching Hai**, a world-renowned spiritual teacher, humanitarian and artist. The musical commemorated the 19th Anniversary of Supreme Master Ching Hai Day to honor her worldwide philanthropic work and peace advocacy.

Siavash Shams stated, *“Loving the Silent Tears was a magical, amazing experience, I’ll never forget it. It was a million dollar production of amazing lights and stars, playing to a sold out crowd. In the end, Master Ching Hai donated a total of \$300,000 to various charities. She left me speechless.”*

The one-time-only show was about humanity’s search for inner peace, told through the experiences of two troubled protagonists, an older woman named Joy who is still bitter over the loss of her son (played by Tony nominee **Patti Cohenour**), and a young man named Pete newly encountering the traps of worldly life (played by award-winning actor **Luke Eberl**). They go on a magical train ride of life through 16 countries or regions, one of which was the Middle Eastern region.

In what was one of the musical’s most emotionally powerful scenes, Siavash Shams was joined by two young and talented female singers, Liel Kolet from Israel and Lebanese-Palestinian vocalist Camellia Abou-Odah, in performing one song, titled “Truth, Ego, Soul and Blessings.” The music was composed by Emmy winner **Doug Katsaros** (“Footloose”).

There were three groups of dancers on stage all around the three singers, each distinctly dancing in Persian, Arab and Jewish styles, but moving in sync and harmony with one another.

Siavash had indicated in a previous interview, *“When you bring so many different cultures together,”* he stated, *“there is an energy that is kind of hard to describe, especially when the lyrics and the vibe is such a positive, about peace, love, humanity.”*

The same was true for the beautiful opening and closing songs performed by the full international cast, with music by Tony and Emmy winner **Don Pippin** (“La Cage aux Folles”) and 2-time Oscar-winning composer **Al Kasha** (“Seven Brides for Seven Brothers”), respectively.

It was Al Kasha who was moved by Supreme Master Ching Hai’s “Silent Tears” that inspired him to create this musical. Kasha set her poignant words to music along with the above composers, as well as: 6-time Grammy winner & 2-time Oscar nominee **Jorge Calandrelli** (“Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”), 2-time Grammy winner & Oscar nominee **Henry Krieger** (“Dreamgirls”), Grammy winner **Nan Schwartz** (“Harry Potter”), and Oscar and 2-time Grammy winner **David Shire** (“Saturday Night Fever”).

The pre-show red carpet was abuzz with excitement upon the appearances of Hollywood celebrities, music icons, and international pop stars. The crowd of fans cheered especially loudly as Siavash Shams made his entrance on the red carpet, looking as cool and sophisticated as ever.

Supreme Master Ching Hai was unable to attend but had recorded a video greeting specially for the occasion, in which she said, *“To all involved in this musical event, blessed be your dedication to make this world a more enjoyable place, cheering up the mass and giving thanks to Heaven and Earth in this way.”*

In the caring spirit of Supreme Master Ching Hai Day, after the musical, the Supreme Master recognized three charity organizations, **Broadway Cares / Equity Fights AIDS**, **Animal Defenders International**, and **Worldwide Veterinary Service**, with generous contributions totaling US\$300,000, made on behalf of all the artists involved in the musical.

In addition, the vegan lifestyle was promoted in alignment with the overall message of peace and cultural understanding. The guest speaker, Academy Award-winning actor **George Chakiris** (“West Side Story”), said during his speech, *“Supreme Master Ching Hai’s message is that all beings...have the right to live in peace and dignity on this beautiful planet; and that each person can do his or her part to save lives, better our planet, and be heroes. And my personal way to be a hero and save these important lives is to be a vegetarian.”*

The incredible evening was emceed by an enthusiastic group of vegan or vegetarian celebrities: TV host and former Miss USA **Susie Castillo**, award-winning actor **Corey Feldman** (“The Goonies”), actress **Kelly Packard** (“Baywatch”), and 2-time Emmy-winning actor **Kristoff St. John** (“The Young and the Restless”).

Guests also enjoyed a pre-show art exhibition of the Master’s uplifting, versatile creative works. After the event, there was a VIP banquet that was catered with delicious vegan dishes.

All in all, it was a heartwarming, positive event. For fans of Siavash Shams, it was a particularly proud moment as he brought his unique Persian voice and presence to “Loving the Silent Tears.”

For exclusive video interviews with the stars, photos and more, please visit www.SilentTearsMusical.com.