

PRESS RELEASE



TURANT

Turkish American Association of North Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 13, 2009

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WHAT: SARI ZEYBEK SHOW

WHERE: Richardson Eisemann Center

WHEN: on October 23rd at 8:30 pm

ADMISSION: www.eisemanncenter.com from \$10 to \$25

WEB: www.turant.org

Turkish American Association of North Texas (TURANT) proudly presents

SARI ZEYBEK, a magnificent musical theatrical show performed by the internationally acclaimed *Aegean University Conservatory Folk Dance Ensemble* with 45 performers, SARI ZEYBEK performers, will be in the United States, New York, and Broadway and in Dallas first time ever to present their outstanding play.

What does it take to win a war not only in battlefields but also in hearts and minds? What does it take to build a nation from ashes? What does it take to make timeless and universal reforms that changed the lives of millions?

Kemal Ataturk -- a visionary reformist, the father of modern Turkey. Sari Zeybek is his story...

Sari Zeybek sheds light on World War I, an important chapter in world history that largely changed the map of Europe and led to the demise of four empires: the Ottoman, Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian.

In World War I, Kemal Ataturk commanded the Turkish Army on various fronts including Gallipoli. There he succeeded in stopping and reversing Anzac and British advances. Gallipoli was a gentlemen's war where both sides heroically fought and

sacrificed a lot. But they did not sacrifice from humanity or mutual respect. This became evident with Ataturk's 1934-tribute to fallen Anzac soldiers:

"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us ... They lie side by side now here in this country of ours... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well!"

The awakening of Turks from the ashes of their war-torn country is no less impressive than that of Phoenix. As a reformist, Ataturk shaped up his society more than any other leader to this very date. He envisioned and implemented reforms regarding education, judicial system, secularism, economics and politics. Turkish women obtained suffrage, social rights and their respectable place in the society. At that time, many thought that these reforms were too liberal, too utopic or too difficult to

maintain. Time and again, we appreciate Ataturk's foresight in enacting these reforms. Especially now, four score years later, this appreciation is stronger more than ever before when we hear the "clash of civilizations" rhetoric.

This is also why Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, hit the nail right on the head when he said the following for Ataturk.

"Centuries rarely produce a genius. Look at this bad luck of ours that the great genius of our era was granted to the Turkish nation."

Ataturk had a human side that he did not attempt to hide. He was a good dancer both in ballroom styles and in Turkish folkloric styles such as Zeybek. On one occasion, he made a big splash in the Bulgarian society when he attended a ball in a Janissary soldier costume. He frequently hosted dinner parties at his residence and attended dance parties. He cherished children and youth, and enjoyed conversing with them. He sought the company of intellectuals. He was perhaps looking for an equal. An equal that he could not find. His marriage ended quickly without a child. In his last days, he fell ill, struggled and got into conflicts with his own friends. Those could be the days when he felt most lonely. Sari Zeybek is his struggle...

Aegean University Conservatory Folk Dance Ensemble was founded in 1989 and has performed at many locations around the world. The Ensemble won the Golden Ciupaga award in the International Highland Folk Festival, one of the oldest and biggest folk events in Poland as well as the Gold Medal in the International Folk and Dance Festival in Dijon, France.