

which it shines. For example, different colored globes all receiving the same light, shine with different colored rays. When the wayfarer, concentrates on the source of that light, she or he is no longer distracted by the differences in the rays. Perceiving this unity, they are transported to the Valley of Contentment.

#### **The Valley of Contentment**

In this Valley, the traveler enters a state of bliss. He or she drinks from delicate wines of the spirit and sits upon the throne of mystic meaning. They discover that their anguish has turned to joy and their grief and mourning have yielded to delight and rapture.

#### **The Valley of Wonderment**

Upon leaving the Valley of Contentment, the wanderer comes to the Valley of Wonderment. At once, she or he is assailed by the whirlwind of wonderment and is flung into confusion. Reeling from astonishment to astonishment they are lost in awe at the works of the Lord. In this Valley, Mírzá Husayn 'Alí introduces the dream as a wondrous sign or token of God's handiwork. He explains that the dream is a window into the mysteries of the world hereafter.

#### **Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness**

Upon reaching the last Valley, the wayfarer is so transformed that he or she is sanctified from worldly attachments and thus lives in the world of God. In this Valley, Mírzá Husayn 'Alí informs the Sufi judge that following the laws of God is the secret and fruit of the mystic path. He assures the judge that the traveler who partakes of this truth will be nourished from the cup of the law. At the very end, Mírzá Husayn 'Alí concludes that the head raised up in the love of God will certainly fall by the sword. This theme alludes to the sufferings and persecutions of those holy souls, saints and heroes who seek God in every age.

For information on Quinn Arts: [mwcquinn@nh.ultranet.com](mailto:mwcquinn@nh.ultranet.com)

Web Page: <http://www.quinnarts.com>

Phone: 603-659-5239

The Magic Bird CD and other artist's materials are also available for sale.

## **Quinn Arts Presents**



# **The Seven Valleys**

**by Mírzá Husayn 'Alí (Bahá'u'lláh)**

**Produced and Performed by**

**Wendy, Marty and Caitlyn Quinn**

**Directed by Bill George**

**Music by Marty Quinn**

**Choreography by Ben Hatcher**

**Sets and Costume Design by Wendy Quinn**

**Hand-painted Silk Sets and Costumes by Ellen Spring**

**Persian Calligraphy by Burhan Zahrai**

**Photographs by Mark Sadan**

**Lighting Design by Bill George**

**Technical Assistance by Elizabeth Mackinnon**

## The Seven Valleys

The Seven Valleys was written around 1855 by the Persian nobleman Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí<sup>3</sup>. At the time, he had been banished to Iraq by the Persian government for being a follower of the Bábí Faith<sup>4</sup>. Living for a time in the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih like a dervish, he became widely known in the region as a mystic with uncommon wisdom and insight. During this period, he was approached by Shaykh Muhyi’d-Din, a Sufi<sup>5</sup> and a judge, who asked Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí to elucidate certain mystical matters regarding the path to God. In response, Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí wrote The Seven Valleys.

In this small volume, Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí describes the mystic's journey in lush poetic language. Throughout the text, he sprinkles poems by Sufi poets such as Rumi and Hafiz, which further add to the beauty of the work. In addition, he refers to portions of a renowned 12th century Sufi poem, The Conference of the Birds, written by Faridu'd-Din 'Attar. These works would have been very familiar to the Sufi judge.

### Preamble

In his preamble, Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí replies that he senses the judge’s sincerity and so has decided to respond to his request. He then draws upon the mystical stages mentioned in the Conference of the Birds and states that "the stages that mark the wayfarer's journey from the abode of dust to the heavenly homeland are said to be seven." As in The Conference of the Birds, he refers to these seven stages in poetic terms as Valleys and calls them the Valleys of Search, Love, Knowledge, Unity, Contentment, Wonderment and True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness. Like Homer's Odysseus, or the knights of the Round Table who sought the Holy Grail, the wayfarer who traverses these valleys must pass through many spiritual trials until transformed, he reaches his or her heavenly goal.

---

<sup>3</sup> Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí (1817-1892) was later known as Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

<sup>4</sup> The Bábí religion was an independent religion begun in the 1840's in Persia by the Báb (Báb means gate). The Báb, much like St. John the Baptist, foretold the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

<sup>5</sup> A Sufi is a follower of a mystical sect of Islam.

### The Valley of Search

The journey begins in the Valley of Search. Here the true seeker, travelling on the steed of patience, searches everywhere for God. In this valley, Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí uses the famous Persian love story of Majnun and Layli, as a metaphor for the mystic's quest for God. In this story, Majnun searches everywhere for Layli, even in the dust. Passersby are stunned by Majnun's unseemly behavior and question him. He replies that he will search everywhere for Layli, leaving no stone unturned. Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí praises Majnun for his devotion and ardor and notes that he exemplifies the qualities of the true seeker.

### The Valley of Love

In the Valley of Love, the seeker, now travelling on the steed of pain, finds his or her beloved and is transported into a state of ecstasy. Reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, the lover is so inflamed by love, that he or she is ready to sacrifice all they possess for their beloved. Dissolved in the fire of love, he or she enters a state of selflessness, known well to those who travel love's thorny path.

### The Valley of Knowledge

Travelling on, the wayfarer finds him or herself in the Valley of Knowledge. In this Valley, the traveler becomes aware of the divine wisdom in all things. He or she begins to see the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end. To explain this idea, Husayn Ali returns once more to the story of Majnun and Layli: separated from his beloved a despairing Majnun finds he can live no more. Late one night, he leaves his home for the marketplace. He is chased by watchmen because there was a curfew in Persia at this time. He runs to a high garden wall and throws himself over it. When he lands on the other side, he finds his beloved Layli in the garden searching for a ring. Majnun realizes that he was guided to his beloved by his enemies and blesses them.

### The Valley of Unity

After passing through the Valley of Knowledge, the wayfarer leaves the planes of limitation behind and enters the Valley of Unity. In this Valley, he or she begins to perceive the underlying unity of all things. Mírzá Husayn 'Ali uses allegory repeatedly to explain this idea. In one of his explanations, he points out that though the sun shines on all things, the effects of its shining differs depending on the nature of the object upon

## About the Artists

**Bill George, director**, received his MFA in Theatre from the Dallas Theatre Center under Paul Baker, studied mime for five years in New York with Paul Curtis of the American Mime Theatre, co-founded the People's Theatre Company in 1976 with his wife, Bridget George, and founded Touchstone Theatre in 1981 where he was Producing Director until 1991. He received the Edinburgh Fringe Festival Award for outstanding new work in 1981, is the 1995 Pennsylvania Solo Theatre Artist Fellowship recipient and is presently working with Bridget to establish Little Pond-an artist's retreat on a small farm in the Pennsylvania countryside. He has toured extensively for the last few years with Styve Homnick performing "The Kingfisher's Wing", a play about a heroic young Baha'i named Badi, throughout North America, the British Isles and Australia and recently premiered a new play that includes and features his daughter, Anisa, entitled "The Marriage of Munirih Khanum.

**Ben Hatcher, choreographer**, is a demi-soloist with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens since 1990. He joined Les Grands Ballets in 1987. He has had numerous lead roles in such dances as The Green Table, Death by Kurt Jooss, In Paradisum by James Kudelka, Coppelia by Martinez /Petipa and Swan Lake by Ivanov / Petipa. He has recently returned from touring Portugal, Holland and Belgium with Jean-Pierre Perreault. In 1998, he received the choreography award at the St. Saveur Arts Festival.



**Marty Quinn** studied and performed at a young age at the Cleveland Playhouse. He grew up playing drums, piano, and tablas (hand drums of India) and studied drumming with Jim Chapin and Paramjoti. He studied voice at the New York School for Commercial Music and at the Voice Studio in Boston. He has played drums for National Broadway Touring Companies throughout the United States including Godspell and has written compositions for dance performers Dudek-Mann and Sarah and Jerry Pearson. For seven years, starting in 1984, he was the percussionist/vocalist with well-known NH based Doah World Music Ensemble performing extensively throughout New England, the continental US, Alaska and India. He has recorded for many artists including jazz guitarist Pat Martino, pianist Darius Brubeck,

For information on Quinn Arts: [mwcquinn@nh.ultranet.com](mailto:mwcquinn@nh.ultranet.com)

Web Page: [www.nh.ultranet.com/~mwcquinn](http://www.nh.ultranet.com/~mwcquinn)

Phone: 603-659-5239

The Magic Bird CD and other artist's materials are also available for sale.

choral group On Wings of Song and most recently with The Heaths. Marty has also created the Design Rhythmics Sonification Research Lab to analyze and perceive information using music. His "Climate Symphony" was recently featured at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and has been cited by the National Science Foundation as an innovative merging art and science.



**Wendy Quinn** received her BS in dance from Hunter College and her MS in Dance Therapy from The City University of New York. She has studied modern dance with Peter Boneham (La Groupe de le Place Royale) in Montreal and Dorothy Vislocki (Alwin Nickolais) in New York. Currently, she studies ballet with Bill Pizutto (White Oak Dance Project, Boston

Ballet) and Angela Sears (Milwaukee Ballet) at Ballet New England in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. She has performed in Canada, the United States, Belgium, Hungary, Taiwan and Germany. Wendy has trained in classical music (piano), choral music and voice at the Voice Studio in Boston. Previously, she was an active member of the avant-garde performing arts community in New York, performing with Pooh Kaye and Simon Forti. Her work includes performances at the Judson Church, Trisha Brown Studio, Grommet Theater and Razor Gallery, as well as publications in Art in the Seventies by Jean Dupuy and Women's Work by Alison Knowles. Currently, she performs with her husband, Marty in their two shows, The Magic Bird and The Seven Valleys. In addition, Wendy recently received a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Antioch New England Graduate School, where her research has focused on women's birthing experiences.

**Caitlyn Quinn**, now 14 years old, has performed since the age of 6 with her parents in The Magic Bird and The Seven Valleys. In addition, she is a member of the Oyster River Players Theater Company. In recent years, she has performed as Puck and Titania in a Midsummer Night's Dream, Pan in Peter Pan, Zaneeta in The Music Man, Louise in Carousel, and Josephine in H.M.S. Pinafore. Caitlyn studies dance at Ballet New England and voice at the Voice Studio in Boston.

