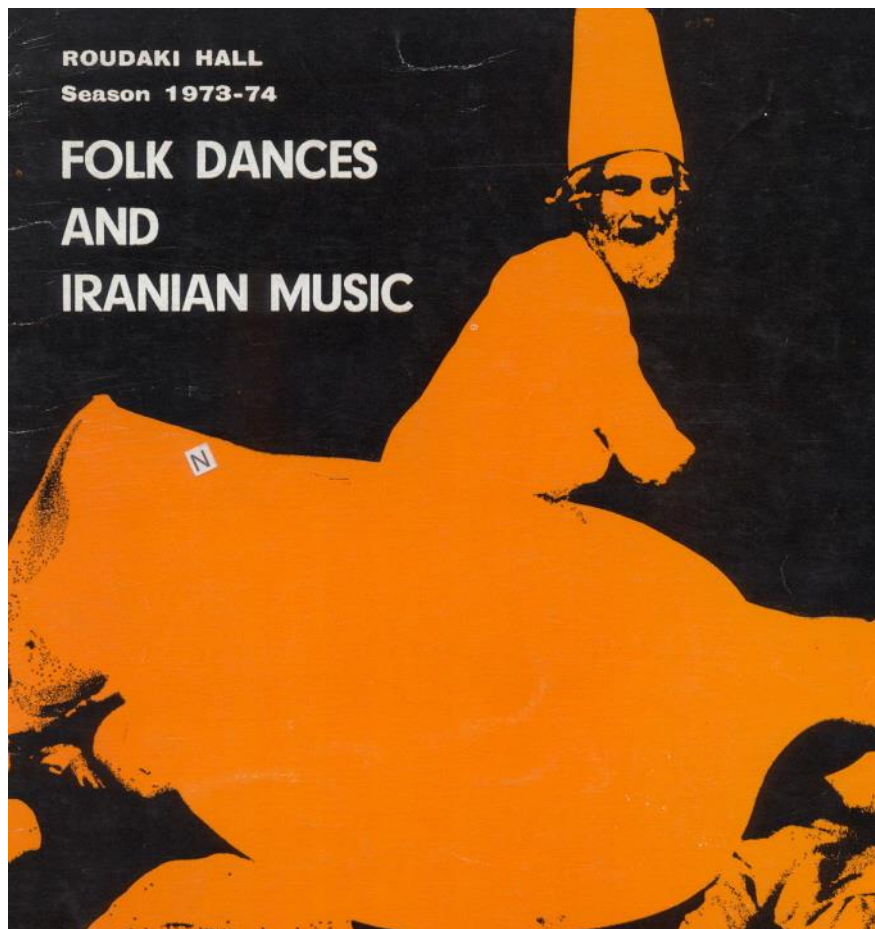




The National Folklore Society of Iran



EPISODE 15 – Let's Talk about the Middle East – An interview with Robert de Warren

<https://youtu.be/FoqK7uwdh0>

Published on Jun 6, 2016

We interview Robert De Warren. Over his long career, he has been a classical and contemporary ballet dancer, director, choreographer, educator and archivist of Persian tribal dance and music. He lived in Iran for 11 years in the 60's and 70's, before the Iranian revolution, and was a personal friend of the Shah. He is currently director of the Sarasota International Dance Festival and Iran-Das, a project attempting to preserve the cultural traditions of tribal Iran. We're hoping that Robert will be able to give us some deeper insight into the history and culture of Iran – a country that is often stereotyped.

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**THE
MAHALLI
DANCERS
OF
IRAN**

The Mahalli Dancers of Iran were the professional performing company that toured worldwide presenting the wealth and ancient tradition of the Iranian dance heritage. The National Folklore Society of Iran was established by the Shah through the Ministry of Arts and Culture to research, process and educate Iranian's and all nations on the wealth of the national dance, ceremonial and tribal heritage of this ancient civilization.

The appointment of Robert de Warren to be the director and to establish the plans for future development marked the turning point that assured the destiny of these Iranian arts treasures. *Sazemane Melli Folklore Iran* was established with four main programs

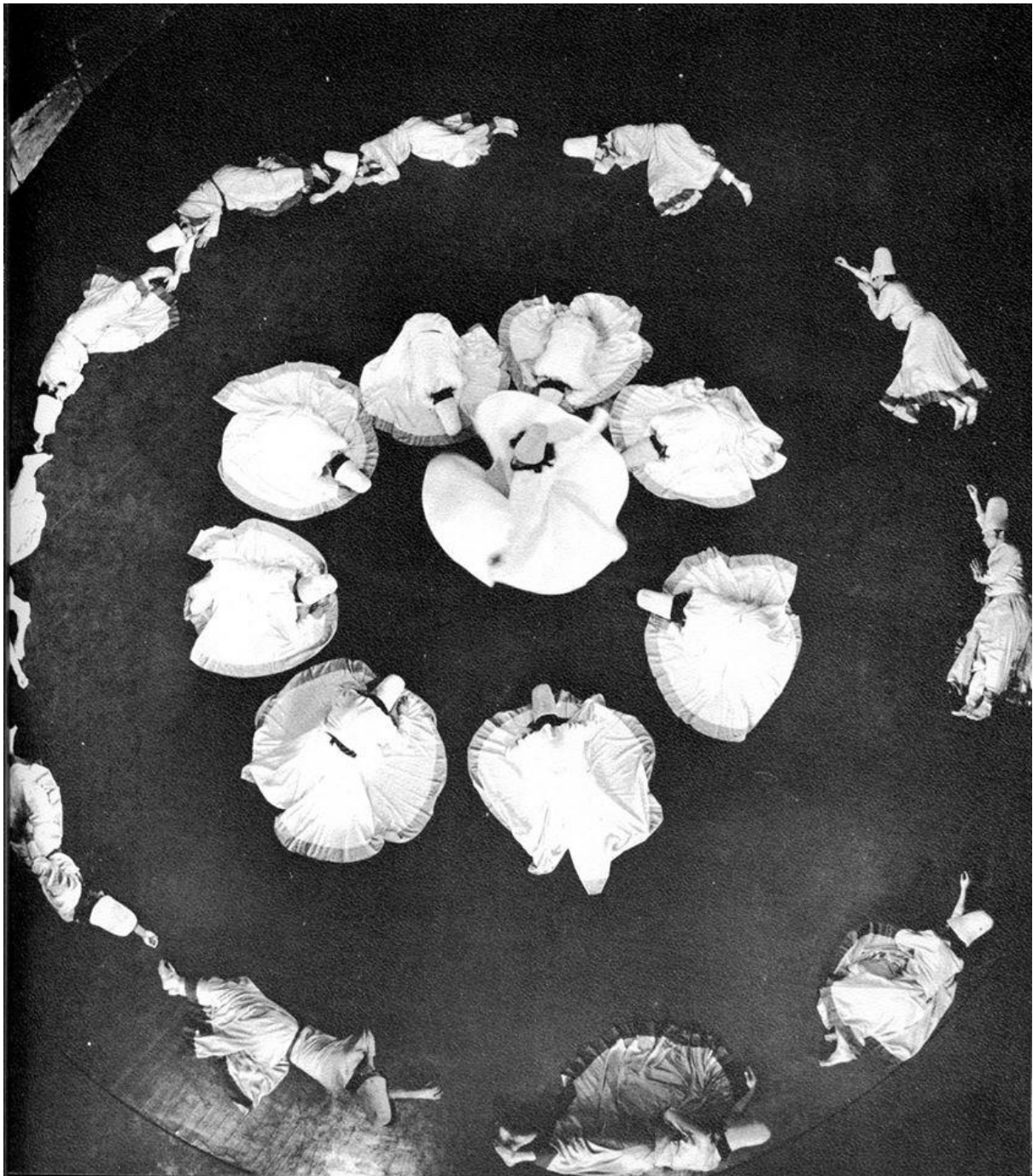
- The Academy – A three year Certificate course for selected high school graduates auditioned nationwide with a keen interest in dance and music
- The Research and Archival Department – Assuring study and recording expeditions nationwide, classifying and archiving the gathered materials in the National Archives of the Society
- The performing company that became known as *The Mahalli Dancers of Iran* – Presenting professional graduates of the Academy at the Roudaki Hall, Tehran's Opera House and on tours worldwide, as ambassadors of Iranian Culture.

A Dervish Ceremony

The first presentation of the newly formed organization
Researched and created by Robert de Warren



Inspired by the original order created by Sufi Moulana Jal al e din Rumi – still extant in Konya, Turkey, then part of the Persian Empire - A remote village in Baluchistan preserved a ceremonial practice that had, though the centuries, assimilated their own ethnic heritage



THE MAHALLI DANCERS OF IRAN

Represented Iran at the American Bicentennial Celebrations

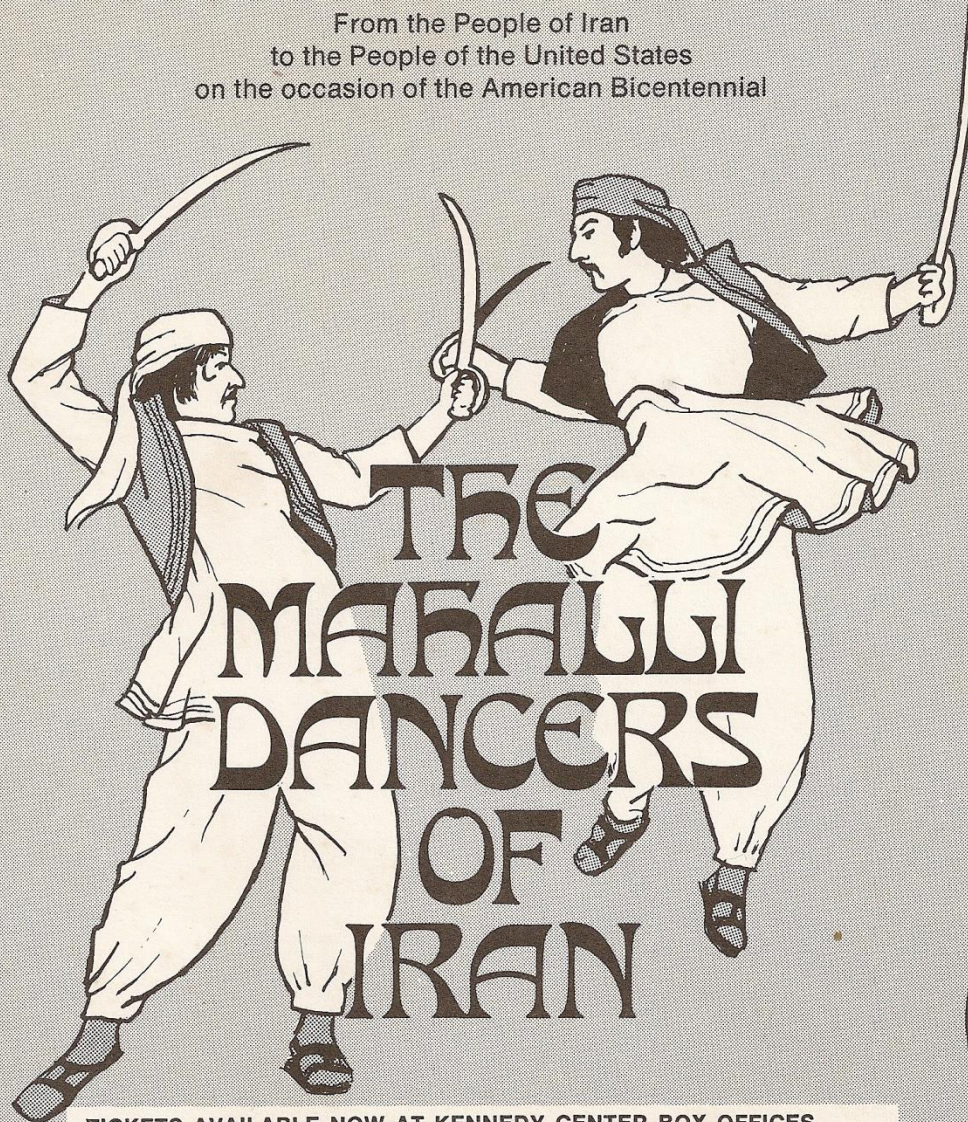
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The program included a dance scene on the tribal dances found at Kohkiluyeh, in the province of Fars

Robert de Warren during the research expedition in that area.



Farzaneh Kaboli – a leading dance in this dance scene
The tribal men in a strong Stick dance – part of the performance



Above – The Turkman Artists on the Kennedy center Marble Terrace

THE MAHALLI DANCERS first foreign tour was to London, at the Sadler's Wells Theater



The company caused great interest and received encouraging press in all the media. Robert de Warren, as a past member of the Royal Ballet wanted London to be the launching of the company's international touring.

HRH The Princess Margaret attended the premiere.

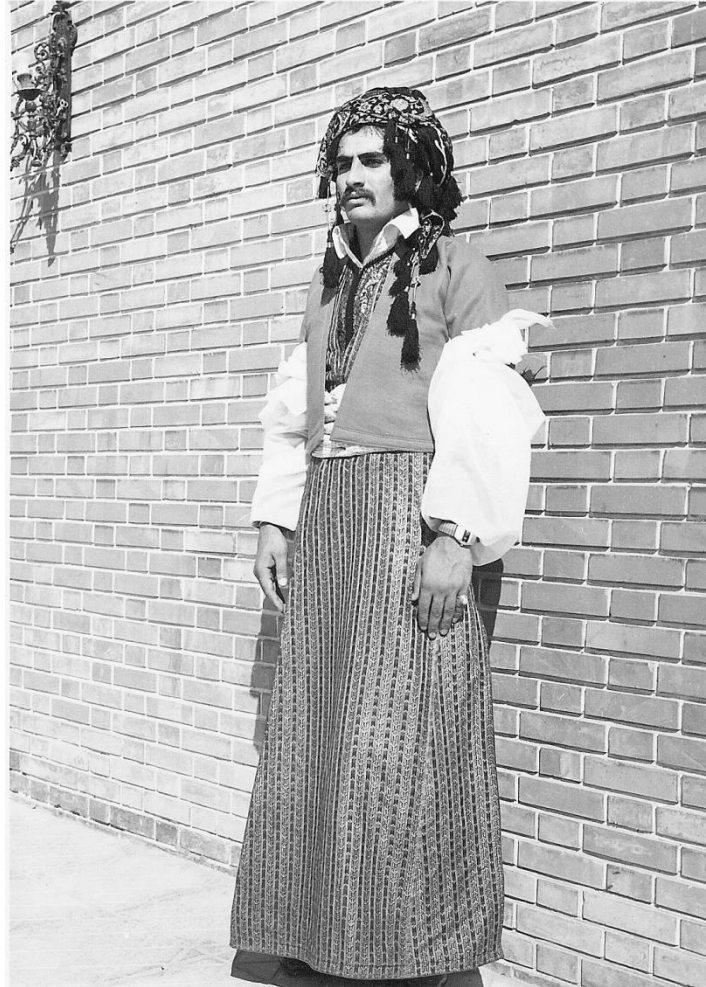
THE DANCES FROM BOJNURD

In North Eastern Khorassan Province were particularly popular



DANCES OF KURDISTAN

Research to Kermanshahan and Kuordistan revealed a large Kudish population completely assimilated into Iranian Culture. Several days were dedicated to filming and sharing the hospitality of the Sanjabi Ashireh, young Khosrow Khan, below, the son of the tribal leader is educated in the USA and applies the science he learned to the agriculture and cattle breeding of his tribal colleagues. He was also a gifted dancer. We recorded numerous dance figures and varied rhythms that, when performed on stage “brought the house down”



The tribal women (above)

THE COMPANY IN PERFORMANCE



Most of Iranian tribal life does not segregate the men and women. Festive occasions allow for their joint participation and express a true sense of fun and love of their traditions. Tribal life is, as so defined – a collective way of living and sharing.

“Chappi” is the most joyful of their dances.





RAKHSE DO DASTMAL
Two Handkerchief Dance

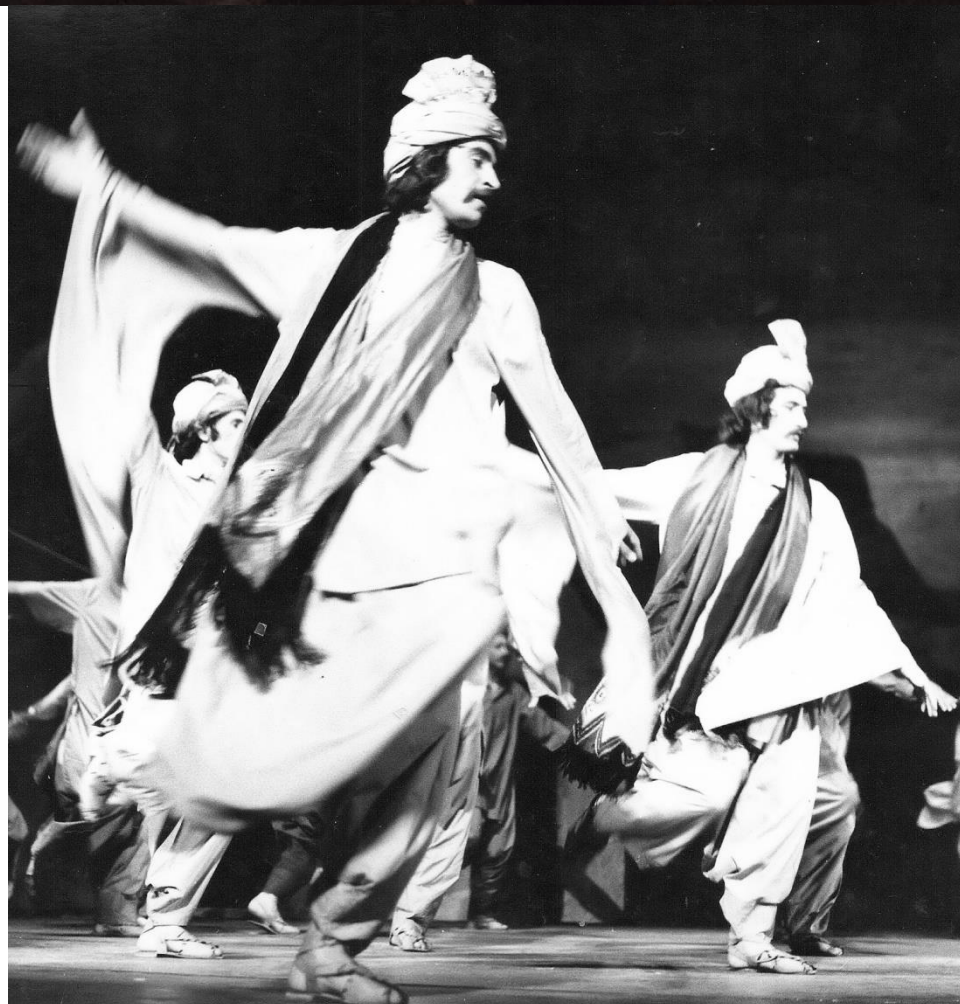
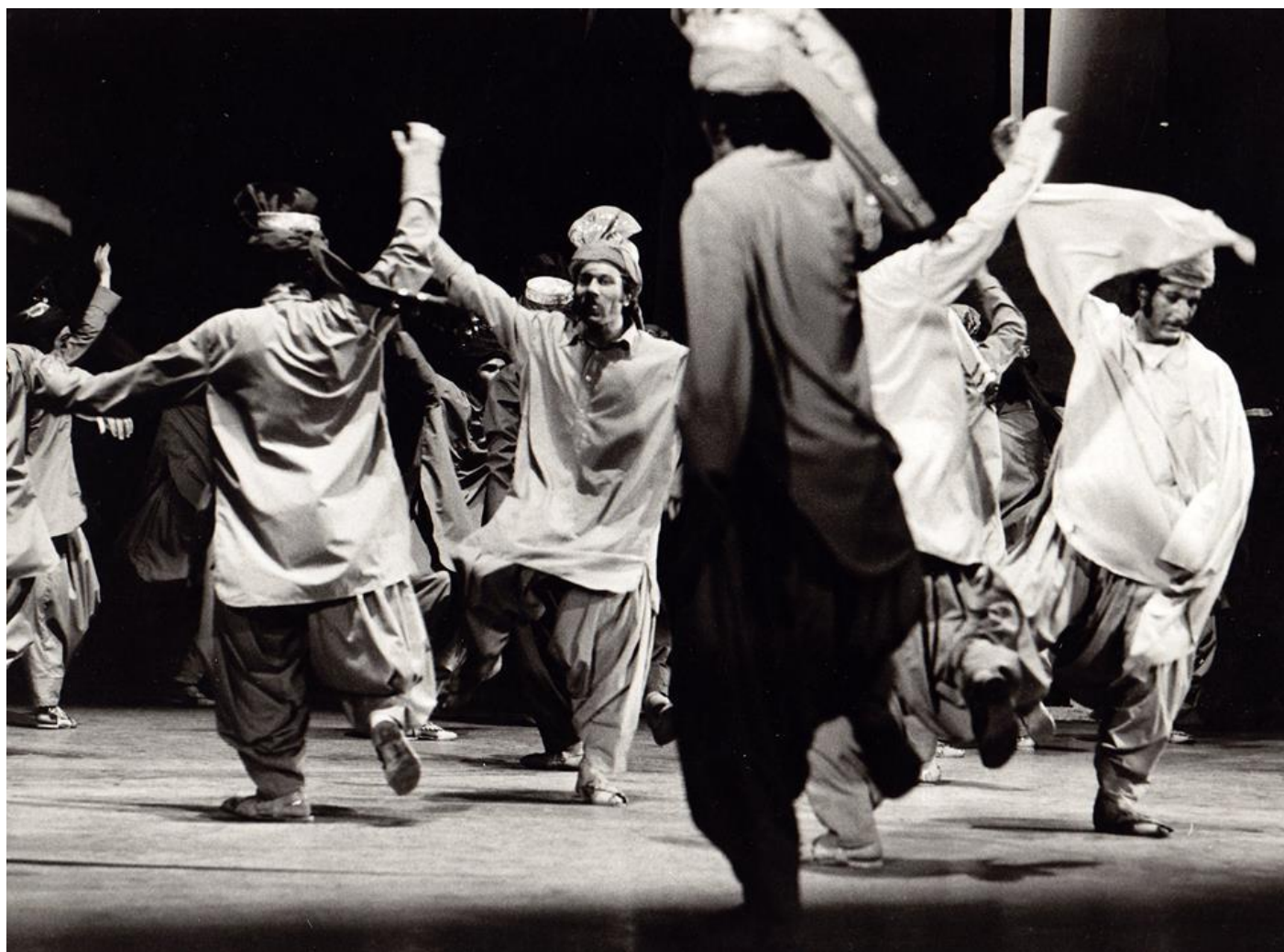
Tribal setting is in the open

Light and sun bring out the high spirits and impressive colors of their elegant garb



BALUCHISTAN
South Eastern Iran





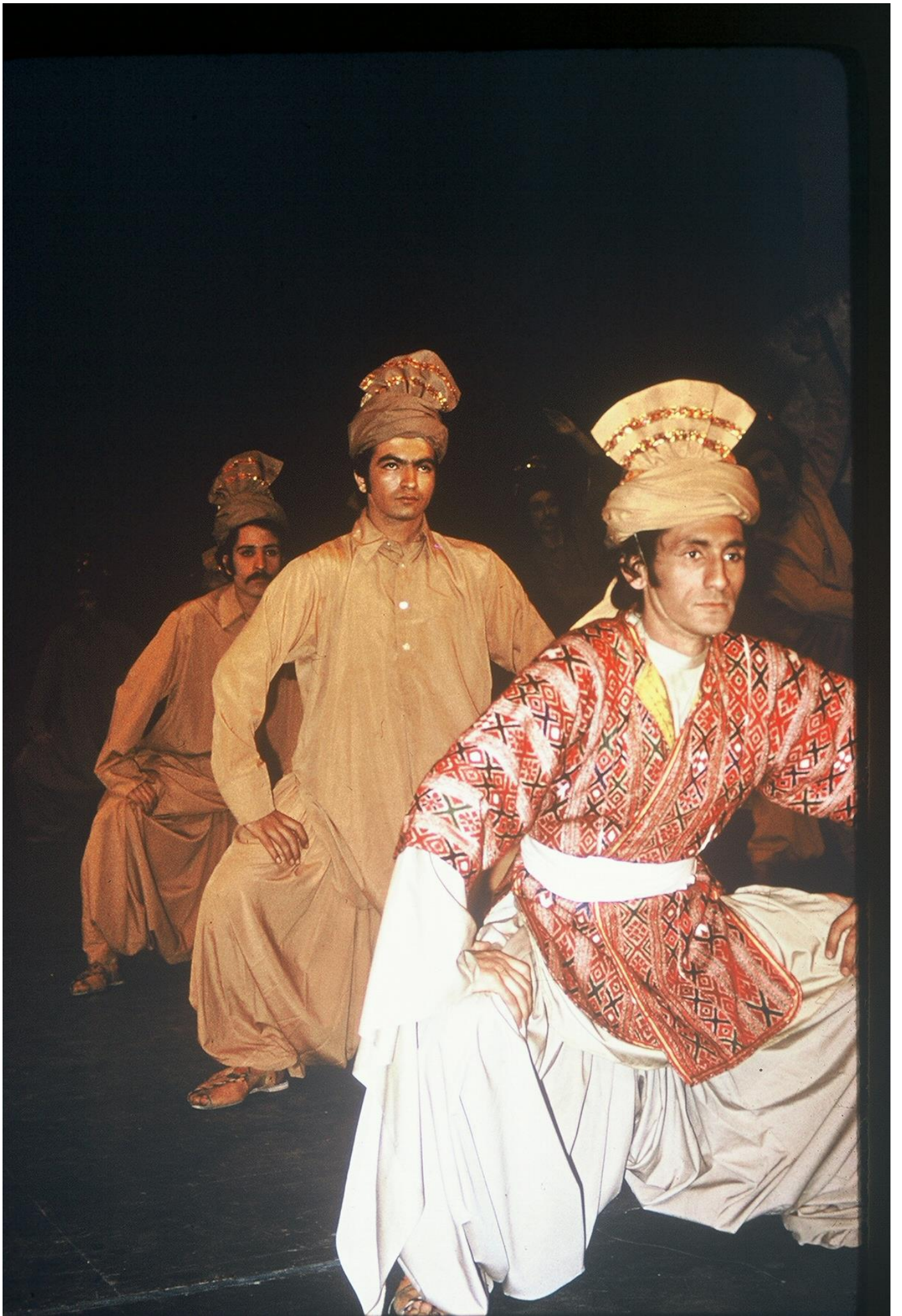
The Province of Baluchistan borders with Pakistan and shares much of the same culture of that area. However, as they have been integrated into Iran for considerable time their traditions, music and dance have modified from the original

Bracelet Dance from Saravan



Below

Men's dances are vigorous and solemn. Rarely does one observe the joy expressed in some of the Northern tribal dances - The Sardar, is a tribal chieftain and heads the line





Dances from Bampour



DANCE FROM ZAHEDAN

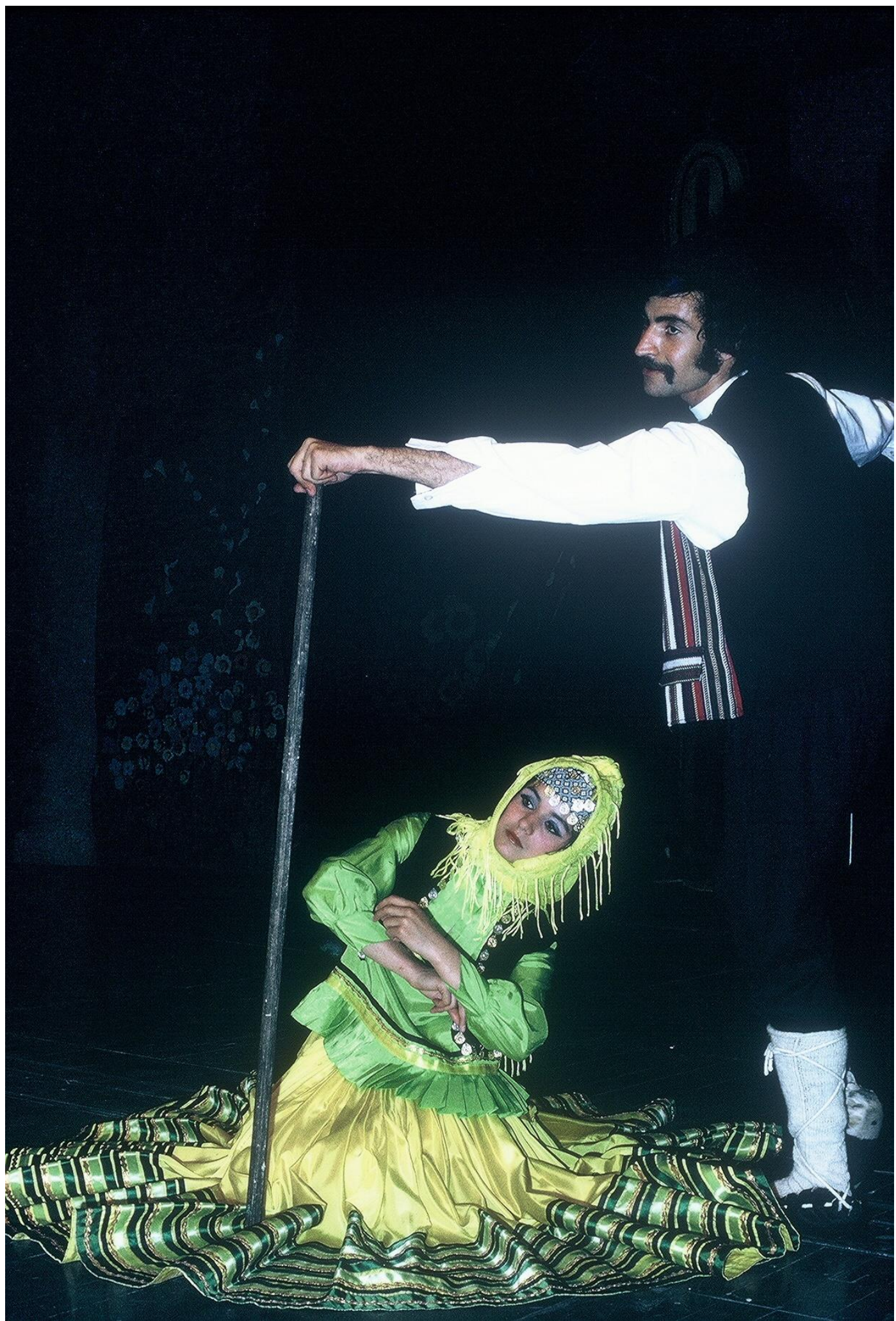


DANCES FROM BAMPOUR

PROVINCE OF GUILAN

On the Caspian Sea





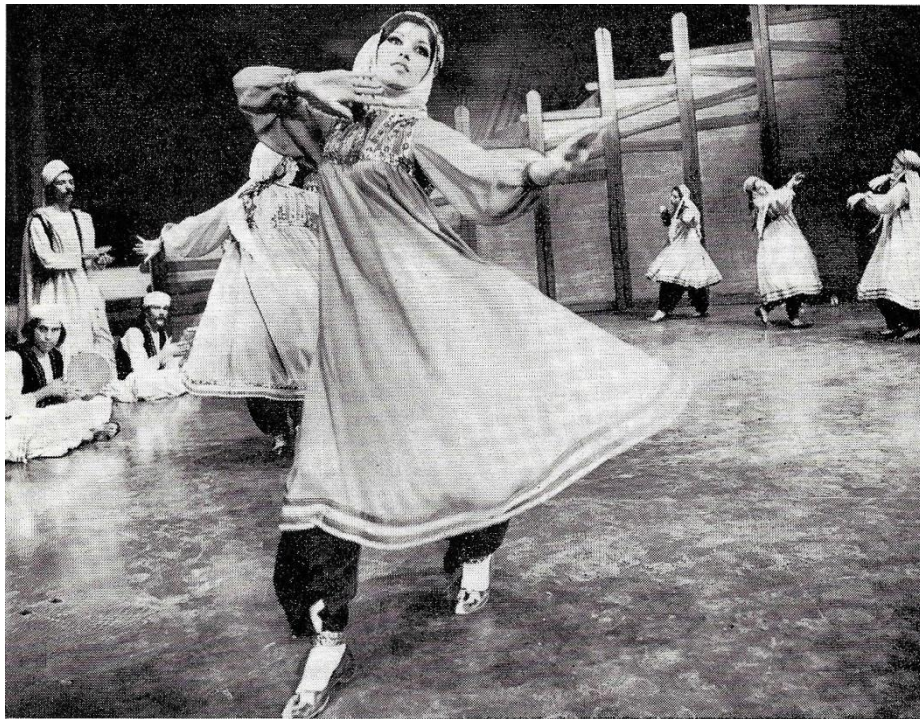
Research brought unexpected surprises



My riding experience was put to good use



DANCES FROM TORBAT –JAM
Khorassan Province





KHAFF – in the same region





This was an exciting event. I had been asked to devise a dance for the opening ceremony with as many tribes as we could include. We finally had three thousand participants from all over the nation

