



**Christian Fernandez, Jason McKenzie, Mohammad Firoozi, Dylan Jones
John Moon, Roberto Riggio, Alseny Sylla**

ATASH.

Born in the vibrant arts scene of Austin, Texas, the international musical ensemble Atash attracts fans of all ages, races, creeds and walks of life around the world. Fronted by Iranian vocalist Mohammad Firoozi, the group features masterful musicians from the Middle East, India, Europe, Africa and the Americas harmonizing to create an engaging musical experience like no other. The sound of Atash grows from the seamless blend of ancient and modern traditions, obliterating boundaries of any kind and uniting performers and audiences alike.

The fire is born...

Mohammad Firoozi, Roberto Riggio, Jason McKenzie, Dylan Jones and John Moon formed Atash in 2001 as an outgrowth of the popular Austin band the Gypsies, an acoustic world music collective that had been hailed by the *Austin Chronicle* in 1998 as “Austin’s best-kept secret!” The quintet decided to break away from the larger group, giving a new vision to the music, and calling itself Atash, which means “fire” in Farsi. The first move was to embark on a two-month tour of the west coast, dubbed the Fear No Venue Tour, going up and down the coast from L.A. to Seattle on extended weekend stints, bringing their unique global sounds to jazz, blues and even sports bars. Wherever the group played, the music managed to impress someone enough to land another gig, or a radio or TV interview, or a private party, and the band forged friendships and contacts from all around the world. On weekdays they attended classes at Ali Akbar College in San Rafael, California. Atash played the last gig of the tour in L.A. on Sunday, September 9, and then started the long journey across the desert back to Texas. They arrived in Austin at around 6 o’clock on the morning of September 11, 2001, destined to have only an hour’s rest before learning of the events in New York which would begin to reshape the world.

Days after the World Trade Center attacks, an attendee at Atash’s last show in L.A., Hollywood actress Shae d’Lyn, phoned the group with the words, “The world needs your music!” and invited Atash back to L.A. to take part in a disaster relief benefit at the Sunset Room, reserving for them the slot following the surprise special guests, the Counting Crows. Since then, the group has sought to share their music and message of international collaboration with diverse audiences across the globe, beginning with the release of their debut album *republic of love*. “I have never believed in governments; only when Love came to rule me, did I become a citizen of the Republic of Love.” (Rumi, 13th century) The album garnered various awards and accolades, including a rating as one of the top 5 Texas albums of any genre for two years in a row in the *Austin Chronicle* Critics’ Polls of 2003 and 2004. The album also generated fans in various countries of the globe by way of internet exposure and the use of Atash’s music in the TV series *Veronica Mars*. Since its release, the band’s sound has continued to evolve with expanding members. **Alsény Sylla** joined the group in 2003, **Christian Fernandez** in 2005, **Aboubakar Sylla** in 2007.

Since 2004, the group has hosted Global Harmony events around Austin which have expanded on the theme of collective creativity in various ways. These concerts have encompassed the collaborative process in many ways -- local and international guests; musicians, dancers, visual artists, designers and engineers; students and professionals; and grassroots as well as international humanitarian organizations. It has been a continual process of learning and experimenting, engaging a growing circle of collaborators around the world. Samples of this work can be seen on Youtube and heard on Atash’s live album *Global Harmony*, released in June of 2007.

Atash has fans all over the world and has performed in a variety of festivals, including Austin’s South-by-Southwest (SXSW, 2003-4), Taiwan’s Sun Moon Lake (2003) and Spring Scream (2007) Festivals, Macau’s Fringe Festival (2004), Berkeley’s How-Berkeley-Can-You-Be Festival (2003), Los Angeles Skirball Center’s Sunset Concert Series (2004) Houston International Festival (2007) and Barcelona’s Cruilla de Culturas Festival (2005), where the band played alongside such acts as Youssou N’Dour, Diego El Cigala, Maceo Parker, and Ojos de Brujo.

Career Highlights, 2001-present

Fear No Venue Tour, July 1-September 9, 2001, West Coast L. A. to Seattle

Sunset Room Disaster Relief Benefit, September 2001, Los Angeles

Concerts for Peace, October 2001-August 2002, Austin

Organized and/or featured in concerts promoting cultural awareness, including Texas Civil Rights Project concert opening for keynote speaker Noam Chomsky.

Red Fez residency, Friday nights, August 2002 – July 2003, Austin

Familiarized Austin audiences with Atash and created Friday night scene.

Recording of debut album *republic of love*, September – December 2002, Austin

SXSW Festival, March 2003, Austin

Debut CD release (*republic of love*), May 2003, Austin

CD Release tour of Southwest, July-August 2003, various cities

Band breaks into new venues such as Knitting Factory and House of Blues in L.A., Palms Casino in Las Vegas, and various others. Tour includes dates in New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Nevada.

Sun Moon Lake Festival, September 2003, Taiwan

Band performs at festival and other locations in Taiwan, including Taipei University.

SXSW Festival, March 2004, Austin

Sunset Concert Series, August 2004, Los Angeles

Atash draws a diverse multicultural audience of thousands at Skirball Cultural Center in Santa Monica as the closing concert of the center's summer series.

World Art Collective and Fringe Festivals, October 2004, Macau (China)

Members meet and collaborate with artists from around the world.

Global Harmony: Five Continents in Concert, Ruta Maya World Headquarters, November 2004, Austin

Global Harmony: Love's Infinite Mystery (concerts), Helm Fine Arts Center, March 2005, Austin

Barcelona Tour, June-July 2005, various dates in and around Barcelona, Catalunya (Spain)

Included Criulla de Culturas festival and appearances at the xiringuito Callao in Canet de Mar.

Global Harmony: Nocturnalia (concerts), Helm Fine Arts Center, March-April 2006, Austin

Earthdance Festival, Houston, September 2006, Houston, Texas

Global Harmony: Eshq (concerts), April 2007, Austin

Taiwan Spring Scream Tour, April 2007, Taiwan

Tour of Taiwan including Spring Scream Festival and appearances in all major cities of the island.

Houston International Festival, April 2007, Houston

A Global Celebration of Africa, July 2007, Ruta Maya World Music Headquarters, Austin

Atash engages with other Austin global artists and humanitarian organizations benefiting Africa.

Austin to Africa, September 2007, Central Market, Austin

Second phase of growing project involving artists and humanitarian organizations benefiting Africa.