



Courtesy of Bellydance Evolution

Bellydance Evolution: Alice in Wonderland @ Ford Theatres

Ernest Kearney July 29, 2014

Its origins are lost to history, but its delights were commented upon by the Roman writer Juvenal.

The French referred to it as “Danse du ventre”.

In Algeria they were “Ouled Nail” dancers.

In the Gulf States it's termed “Raqs al Nasha'al”.

At the turn of the century, America was introduced to the dance form through the gyrating hips of the performer “Little Egypt.”

Belly Dancing.

The mere mention of the name conjures up images of Ali Baba, Sinbad the Sailor and the mysteries of the Middle East. What it probably doesn't bring up are images of a fussy White Rabbit with an oversized watch. But L.A. based Bellydance Evolution is about to try to change that.

Formed in 2009 by Jillina Carlano, Bellydance Evolution has taken what has traditionally been seen as a solo dance and treated it to a more Western view as a vehicle for a dance troupe with the stated goal of “re-imagin[ing] Middle Eastern dance for the 21st century.” To this end elements of Hip Hop, break dance and other styles have found their way into performances which can be regarded as fusion ballets of belly dancing – plus.

This radical approach to the ancient art form has certainly found favor, with the company having performed across Europe and the Middle East. Bellydance Evolution was also invited to participate in the Mawazine Festival, a celebration of world music held annually in Rabat, Morocco where such eminent artists as Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston appeared. There the company performed before the Her Royal Highness Lalla Salma, wife of King Mohammed VI.

The company has presented two prior shows “*Immortal Desires*” and “*Dark Side of the Crown*” (“Kinda like Hamlet in belly dance costumes,” according to creative director Lauren Boldt). But “*Alice in Wonderland*” is the first time the company had approached adapting a production from such a well known subject as Lewis Carroll's madcap children's tale.

Under the guidance of Carlano, who appears as The Queen of Hearts, the seven core members of the company plus sixteen invited guest artists from around the world tackled the project, and, according to Boldt, used Carroll's story as a springboard for our own imagination.”

Boldt who appears as Alice remarks that it's “the first time being a blond belly dancer paid off.”

The show which will be presented at the Ford Amphitheatre on Friday August 1st at 8:30 p.m. had its debut in San

Music for “*Alice in Wonderland*” has been composed by Paul Dinletir, Carlano’s husband, and co-founder of “audiomachine” a music production house which serves the film industry with original music and sound designs in the promo campaigns. Among the films he has worked with are *The Hobbit*, *300*, and *The Hunger Games*.

With Carlano and company’s joining of contemporary, tribal and acrobatic dance “*Alice in Wonderland*” promises to be as madcap a mingling as Carroll’s own story, only this time as we watch the White Rabbit go down his rabbit hole, we go down with a shimmy.

Alice in Wonderland

John Anson Ford Amphitheatre
2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East
Hollywood, CA 90068

Performances:

Friday, August 1, 2014, 8:30 p.m.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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An award winning L.A. playwright and rabble-rouser of note who has hoisted glasses with Orson Welles, been arrested on three continents and once beat up Charlie Manson.