

## Malibu residents put new spin on niche dance



*Jilina Carlano performs a belly dance move during a performance with Bellydance Evolution. Photos submitted*



Ashleigh Fryer, Senior Editor

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Jilina Carlano and a cast of 30 professional belly dancers sway in time with the sheer white curtains that billow atop a light ocean breeze, connecting the natural movements of their bodies with the natural exhale of the Pacific Ocean.

“Working in this space, being so connected to the beauty of the environment, is unique to any place in the world,” Carlano said. “Where else would we possibly want to be.”

Perched high above the sea in her and husband Paul Dinletir’s Big Rock hideaway, the couple have integrated their professional disciplines with the serenity of their home’s location. Carlano, founder of the dance company Bellydance Evolution, hosts most of her group’s rehearsals from her home studio, while Dinletir, co-founder and lead

composer for motion picture production house Audiomachine, composes his original pieces from his adjacent music studio.

Through Bellydance Evolution, which embarked on its third global tour in April and which will be gracing Los Angeles' John Anson Ford Theatre stage on Friday, Aug. 1, Carlano travels to every continent. But Malibu always draws her back in.

"It's like a honeymoon with me and with Malibu every time she comes back home," Dinletir said.

"Coming back to this is like a staycation in itself," Carlano said, laughing.

Bellydance Evolution's latest production, a creative interpretation of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," represents one of several collaborations between Carlano and Dinletir, with Dinletir crafting an original score for the theatrical event.

"It's modern meets eastern with a flair of theatrical drama," Dinletir said. "It's very fun in a creative sense because it's cinematic in nature."

Carlano, who also owns Evolution, a dance studio in Studio City, began her unique pursuit of belly dancing six years ago.

"I traveled to Egypt to research and study all of the elements of the art form — the music, culture and history of belly dance," Carlano said.

"What makes it so unique is the room for self expression. I found that the dance suited my body and felt natural."

Having built a strong factual and emotional connection to the storied art form, Carlano set out to bring new life to belly dancing for western audiences, doing away with the tradition of solo performances.

"It's a very niche thing that I do, so we're trying to open the company to a mainstream audience," Carlano said. "I kept running into misconceptions about what belly dance is. My motivation was to make people see it as a high art form, a theatrical production."

While "Alice in Wonderland" is Carlano's third production with her

company, it is her first experience using a well-known tale as the inspiration for the show she created.

“Because It’s been done before and people know the story, they have certain expectations; we show them a completely different interpretation,” Carlano said. “Almost all cultural backgrounds are familiar with the story, so that opens a lot of doors. If people come in with an open mind, they can discover something unexpected.”

Bellydance Evolution’s production of “Alice in Wonderland” will premiere at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 1, at the John Anson Ford Ampitheatre, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd in Hollywood.

Ticket prices start at \$18 and are available at [www.fordtheatres.org](http://www.fordtheatres.org) or by calling (323) 461-3673.

For more information, visit [www.bellydanceevolution.com](http://www.bellydanceevolution.com).