

Suraya Hilal Dance Company



Photos ©: Pedro Altuna

The Production:

Oscillations (El Mizan)

Suraya Hilal's new work boldly explores the true meaning of Oscillations; the swing of the pendulum, the journey and the search for the point of balance (El Mizan) in ones body and mind. Through the sublime language of Hilal Dance, her work infuses the traditional with the ideal, heritage moulded to modernity, the classical reinterpreted through originality.

The production is set to Arab classical music with a focus on *Oud*, the oldest and foremost musical instrument of the Arab world. For Suraya, the singularly clear sounds and vibrations of the musical notes emitted from these soft and yet powerful instrument have the effect of uniting head and heart. The strings when played vibrate crystal clear notes of pure intellect and simultaneously resonate through the wood with the warmth of heart. Similarly, the movements and choreographies in *Oscillations*, spring from the same font of inspiration, finding that point of equilibrium where there is ***a union of opposites, a state beyond separation, that sense of freedom, where cultural identity melts with the universal, where one feels limitless and moves without effort, where integrated bodies carve clear lines of emotion and life.***

Oscillations, uses the inspiration of the *Oud* with Joseph Tawadros' evocative solo improvisations. The choreographies, set for two dancers, bring to light the evocative themes of taking flight (*On the wing*), a solo dialogue (*Between head and heart*) and (*Haneen*), *where two different identities merge as one*. The dancers using pure movement aesthetic and clear lines of expression undertake a journey and a search which embraces the notion that ultimate freedom is found within.

Press quote, On Oscillations:

"Hilal has the ability to cast hypnotic spell with the simplest of movements; a solitary gesture or an intense gaze – to watch her perform is to see music"
(The Metro) Keith Watson

"Absolute poetry" (Stuttgarter Nachrichten)

The Company

The Hilal Dance Company is uniquely placed in the contemporary dance world, drawing upon the essence and roots of Arab/Egyptian culture.

The company's founder, Suraya Hilal, has been lauded as one of the great dance talents of our time and her company's work represents an unparalleled development of Arab/Egyptian dance.



Al Janub

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Aseel

Hilal draws inspiration from her cultural roots in Egypt and is also informed by global contemporary dance practice. Over a twenty-year period of creative work, research and teaching, Suraya has refined and re-developed many of the traditional forms of movement in Egyptian/Arab culture and has given them a modern presence. From the year 2000, the totality of her work became known as Hilal Dance®.

The diverse and progressive power of her work makes it tremendously exciting for both established and new audiences. Also characterised by collaborations with virtuoso Egyptian and European musicians and artists - the dialogue between live musicians and dancer being one of the hallmarks of this form – Hilal's work offers a vibrant introduction to a cultural tradition reinterpreted as a progressive integrated Contemporary form.

Over the years, Suraya has created and toured many theatre productions, including **Celebrations, Jewels, Divine Rites, Colours of Cairo, Beloved, Return of the Spirit, Journey to Lights, Spirit of the Heart** and, most recently, **Al Janub** and **Aseel** (2003/06). Her work has been showcased throughout Europe to great critical acclaim in many well

known theatres including **Sadler's Wells** & the **Queen Elizabeth Hall, London**; the **Edinburgh Festival**; **Tanzhaus Düsseldorf**; **Haus der Kulturen Berlin**; **Tans Hus Stockholm**; as well as in many other major cities and venues. Her work has also been the subject of documentaries by Channel 4, ITV, and the BBC.

Background to Suraya's new work:



Cultural heritage, traditions and their rich source of wisdom and knowledge often provide the strong base or bedrock for the artist to draw upon during the creative process. Well established traditions can be the pivotal point in the evolutionary process for creating something new and progressive. It is important to draw upon traditional elements in a fluid, instinctive way so that the creator can move and progress these forms into new and different realms of expression reflecting the *now* experience of life. One can say that this is the authentic way of moving into contemporary expression. The contemporary form that Suraya Hilal has created

emerges from the movement heritage of the Arab culture and is fully informed by the wisdom of the East, where the roots of her system lie in the way the body inherently moves and her inner response to music. What makes her work contemporary is not so much in borrowing or using any western contemporary dance vocabulary, but in the natural progression and expansion of her eastern traditions which also embrace global culture. The western elements that she has integrated in her work are in the use of theatre dynamics that expand and highlight the dramatic expressions of her dance. Also, her creative response does not stop at Arab music alone. She has worked with western classical music (chamber ensembles) Jazz and other idioms.

Press Quotes

(Hilal Dance Company)...moves through space with upright, elegant steps. Moods change with the music and the authentic, multi-layered garments, and the seemingly feather-light solos, duos and trios are filled with dramatic tension. The canon of movement of the dance is so rich and complex that the choreographer dispenses with the use of scenery-and rightly so. (Westdeutsche Zeitung) Feb.2002

"In Khud w'Hat, a duo performed by Hilal and Alessandro el Bascioni ... the pair created what might perhaps be called harmony at a distance. The contact between the two remained limited to the eyes throughout, their bodies never touching. But the movements of the woman mirrored those of the man and vice versa, an unaffected, joyful cooperation evolved, no game of contradictions pressing for resolution". (Westdeutsche Zeitung) 2004

"Hilal & El Bascioni (...) elegant double forms; supreme ease paired with discreet sensuality." (Rheineshe Post) 2005

"Hilal captivates the audience with a sublime sensuousness and purity of movement, giving visible expression to the timelessness of ancient tradition." (Rheineshe Post) 2002

“Suraya Hilal is a choreographer of subtlety and high skill and a dancer of quality - an exhilarating evening.”
(The Times)

“The audience exhale in unison as the other musicians strike up in celebration. Suraya Hilal is unique phenomenon”.
(The Independent on Sunday)

“The eyes of the house clung to Suraya Hilal with her magnetic charisma.”
(Kopenhagen, Information)

Contact:

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