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Belly Divas



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Statement

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Educations & Formations An American-European Phenomenon

Surveying the middle eastern dance (m.e.d.) scene since a couple of years I am noticing that there is a trend becoming standard. Trendsetter, cutting edge teacher and instructor all over the world seem to have a similar dream if not a vision: elevating the standard of the m.e.dance.

Obviously, there are a few teachers who are working on the same page, trying to bring not only clearer, systematic hip- and isolation-techniques for m.e.d. but also influencing the oriental dance with so called classical standards such as postures, turning techniques, feet work, space and scenario use etc.

In order to give a brief overview of just a few of those educations, I would like to mention three formations.

A very present formation in the US is the "Suhaila Salimpour Format". Only having been twice (so far) to the States, I nevertheless have been able to see and say who had worked with this technique. The hip movements were clear, sharp, well isolated and rhythmically correct. Stage work seem to be familiar. People who worked sincerely with this system are clearly outstanding to other "non-educated" (without any judgement!!!!)

As European inhabitant I certainly survey the European market.

Ever since, Momo Kadous came first time to Germany his aim was to elevate the standard of m.e.d. Watching his long-term students it's clearly remarkable what they have in common: stage experiences, turn techniques, good feeling and understanding for the music, modern Egyptian style in good stage-manner.

This long-term success may have inspired him to break this system down and make it feasible in a shorter time. Therefore he developed "EGMODOUS". EGMODOUS presents the oriental dance as a modern art: traditional elements of oriental dance are fused with nowadays dances to a new kind of art. Planned are worldwide performances under the stage direction of Momo Kadous. The EGMODOUS professional troupe will exist three times in Germany.

Doubtful, I do see educational offers on both sides of the "big lake" given by so called "stars of the middle eastern dance scene". Sure, there are more interesting formats on the market. But most of them do cover such a big amount of subjects that there is almost no time left to learn each subject profoundly.

Finally, I would like to mention a cooperative work of ESTODA* (ESsential Technique of Oriental DANCE) & jomdance* (JazzOrientalModerndance). Although I do not want to promote my own educational

system here, I realistically have to mention these two independent educations thus perfectly working together ones, when I speak of European wide formations. They are offered in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and do match perfectly to each other.

ESTODA* is a two years education built upon five serial modules. Each module has a separate exam at its end. Pupils can only proceed to the next level if they have successfully passed each exam. Module I-IV are made for increasing one's own technical skills (isolation-techniques as well as m.e.d. movements). In module V pupil learn how to teach/instruct these techniques. Due to the huge amount of the to be learned technical skills, there is no time left for "dance-techniques" such as how to move on a stage, how to point your feet, how to make your dance dynamically etc. That's the point where the jomdance* formation starts.

Jomdance* is built up the same. Also 5 modules in 2 years. Module 1 - 4 is considered to increase ones technical skills concerning one's stage dance level. Turns, postures, arms and feet co-ordinations as well as room awareness, jazz and Moderndance movements, dynamics in dance and space use on stage related to m.e.d. During module 5 all kind of information will be spread about stage lightning, choreographically constructions, costuming, stage make-up etc. Pupils do also have to pass exams at the end of each module. This system assures that the skills become more and more equalized and higher the closer the final exam comes.

In order to spread our ideas and educations/formations Momo Kadous as well as Yasmin al Ghazali and I do offer our systems in several different places at the same time. This is only possible, because these modules/classes are given on weekends - like workshops but much more intensive! The time between each official training has to be used for personal rework, network and of course for practicing the learned techniques.

As several people work for the same goal/aim it is a logical progress that the dance skills in Europe - especially in Germany - increase quite rapidly at the moment.

I am looking forward to seeing the m.e.d. evolution during the next 5 years. I definitely think that a co-operation of those modern educations/formations in what way ever would be appreciated. If we do want to bring the m.e.d. to an accepted dance form, we do have to work more on educational formats. Why do ballet dancers, jazz and modern dancers as well as contemporary dancers do have to practice such a long time before they are allowed to enter a stage? And why do m.e.d. performers often even do not know what it means to enter a stage? Well, first of all, "real dancers" are taught correctly and get constantly feedback concerning their improvements. "Real dancers" do have to pass a lot of exams, auditions and competitions before they are even noticed to be good. This educational evolution of each dancer takes at least 6 to 10 years. Isn't it in some way ridiculous (and a shame) that the m.e.d. scene wants to be recognized and accepted by those other dance forms but most of the m.e.d. community members do not want to accept or do not even know that this is the way it has to go if one wants to become a "real dancer"?

If you are interested in having more information please feel free to contact me at info@jomdance.com

Yours Said el Amir