

Brazilian Belly Dancer Dances Her Way to the Middle East

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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Spreading and teaching the Modern Arabic Dance style in Brazil. This is the aim of belly dancer Déborah Valério, who gained renown with the modality in the Arab countries in the five years during which she lived in the East. She is promoting the workshop "Knowing and dancing the Lebanese Style (Modern Arabic)," in the city of São Paulo.

Déborah, who came back from the Middle East in April after having worked at several restaurants and luxury hotels in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Syria, stated that nowadays the Modern Arabic Dance is the most practiced in those countries. "It is interesting, because it has become a trend now," she said.

According to the Brazilian dancer, born in São José dos Campos, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, this dancing style is a combination of different techniques.

"It is more dynamic and influenced by jazz and classical modern dance steps. It escapes the Egyptian stereotype," explains Déborah, who adopted the style in the Arab countries and pleased the public. According to her, Modern Arabic Dance features wider movements.

The workshop to be given by the dancer will include a theoretical section, featuring content about the dance and tips for dancers regarding conduct and structuring shows. The practical section will count on warm-ups, techniques for the hips with sequences, displacements and spins, and the use of the head and hair in motion. Participants will also be able to use their creativity in order to develop their dancing style with the influence of other styles, such as jazz, axé and samba.

The course, which is going to last four hours, is turned to students and Arabic dancers with intermediate knowledge. Déborah advises students to take with them a pair of high-heeled shoes, a veil and a notepad.

Dream Come True

What Brazilian belly dancer does not dream of dancing in the Arab world? It was in 2002 that Déborah started living that dream. A Lebanese businessman, based in Brazil, got to know her work and offered Déborah a temporary job. "I really wanted to have an international career, and it was always a great goal and dream of mine to go to the Arab countries," stated the dancer, who first started dancing at seven years of age.

According to Déborah, before she left the country, she had already taught belly-dancing classes at several gyms and cultural spaces in São Paulo, where she also directed and choreographed dance shows. In addition to São Paulo, she gave workshops in Argentina and Bolivia. Her first invitation to work in the Arab countries came when she was 19, but

Déborah explains that she was not prepared and decided to wait a couple more years.

In the five and a half years during which she lived in the Arab world, Déborah would work everyday. "Every evening there was a show," said the dancer, who used to dress up by herself and dance for nearly two hours each day. According to the dancer, jobs were temporary, and she would stay at each hotel for three months at most. "In the beginning, adapting myself was quite difficult," said the dancer, who went there without speaking Arabic.

Déborah traveled to the Middle East with 15 belly dancing outfits and lots of willpower. Once a year she would come to Brazil to visit her family. "It was very tiresome," she stated. According to her, there are currently around 20 Brazilian belly dancers with temporary contracts to work in the Arab countries. Many cannot stand to stay for long and come back. To those for whom the dream has not yet come true, Déborah recommends obtaining lots of information regarding working conditions and learning how to speak fluent English, at least. "Plus devoting oneself to the dance," she claimed.

Service

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