

Info – 12 October 2009

Leila Haddad

"The voice can have body"

All week long, Oriental dance invests the town thanks to the generosity of the choreographer Leila Haddad, exceptional guest of La Comédie de Clermont.

Info – What makes the richness of Oriental dance?

Leila Haddad – This is a vast question! When you see its influence on contemporary dance, you realize that its technique and magnitude constitute a very clear language for the audience. Oriental dance is still present, in perpetual development, although its roots thrust deep into earliest antiquity. Béjart once said that the 21st Century would be the one of dance. It would be a pity to miss this appointment! Fortunately, watching a body move is now considered as real writing, a universal language throwing bridges among cultures.

Info – Tell us about "Zikrayat" which will be performed on Tuesday and Wednesday ...

Leila Haddad – It is a tribute to Om Kalsoum. This woman is the greatest diva of the Arab-Berber world, but also a mythical, free, independent and political figure. All generations and social backgrounds have listened to her. Moreover, they call her the fourth pyramid! In fact, this voice is so sacred that you don't dare to move when you listen to it. As a result, I have broken a sort of taboo by paying her tribute. But for me, Om Kalsoum has a voice that dances, a voice that has body. The show indirectly tells about her life, with the song "Zikrayat" as a leitmotiv.

Info – What will be the programme of the ball that will take place at La Comédie national theatre on Place de Jaude on Friday evening?

Leila Haddad – It is the first time for me to be entrusted with such a huge task. The theme revives the Egyptian musical of the forties. There will be a screening of some extracts of Arabic silent films, accompanied by a group of seven musicians with a festive repertoire. Some dancers will intervene on stage. In the audience, some leaders who would have been initiated during the week will invite people to dance, in order not to be just an ear but a body in movement. It's this notion of communion that is extraordinary.

Info – The need to share your passion is that important?

Leila Haddad – It's the main thing! Passing on is for me as vital as going on stage. In Western ballet dancing, you dance first and then you pass on. For me the two must go together. I need to receive and give to be stirred ...