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Clermont-Métropole

CHOREOGRAPHER: Oriental dances activist, she is the guest of La Comédie de Clermont for a week.

Leila Haddad's body message

With Leila Haddad, La Comédie de Clermont offers itself an Eastern Pearl that should illuminate its cultural season. And the audience will have one week to appreciate it.

"I have decided to fight to defy taboos by giving an identification to Oriental dances". Born in Tunisia of a Syrian father, Leila Haddad has been living out dance all her life. "Since I was in my mother's womb. Because it is at this level that everything begins. It is the cradle of humanity, a sacred part of the body where all the energies come from. It is not the term "belly dance" that disturbs me, but the degrading connotation lying behind it since the time of Napoleon."

Wednesday evening, at the community arts centre of Champratel, this choreographer had the occasion to express herself. Her teaching skills of Oriental dance, a field in which she excels, fascinate and attract. A feline, sensual magnetism, and eyes that survey space. Harmony of gestures and voluptuousness of movements. Anatomy becomes poetry. The message is eloquent.

Each young woman present at this providential lesson savours these moments of grace and pure happiness. The artist communicates without forgetting anyone. But beyond a simple lesson, this session prefigures an important and brilliant week concocted by Jean-Marie Grangier, manager of La Comédie, and his team.

Leila Haddad remains the first woman to have introduced Oriental dance on theatre stages. Too many times banned from theatres, these dances originate from the Middle-East and Egypt - and not from North Africa.

This is the case for the evenings of Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 October at the Maison de la Culture of Clermont-Ferrand. With *Zikrayat* – memory -, tribute is paid to the great Egyptian diva Om Kalsoum. This musical poem enhances the status of these aesthetically perfect sylphlike dances.

Big event of the season of La Comédie de Clermont since many years, the Ball enjoys, this time, a choreography by Leila. "People will come to watch a show. But confronted with the music, they will let themselves be carried away by the atmosphere. It is for me a beautiful experience that fills me with enthusiasm" she says, her eyes twinkling mischievously.

Conscious of attracting as many people as possible Friday evening, Place de Jaude, the elegant dancer hopes to bring together all generations, cultures and social conditions, including men. "I am convinced that they will get caught into the game!" She has the power to convince them.

Guy Lemaître