

Iskandar Dance Company in El Saqiyeh



Alessandro el Bascioni, is a leading dancer, choreographer and a teacher based in London. He works in collaboration with Suraya Hilal especially in the creation of *Aseel* 2004 and has been a major part of other productions including *Al Janub* 2002.

Alessandro is now launching his own Iskandar Dance Company with the programme, *El Saqiyeh*, (The Waterwheel). He is accompanied by the dancers, Alaiz Arregi, Claudia Weitzman, the percussionist Ibrahim el Minyawawi and the recorded music of the *Musicians of the Nile*. Alessandro's new work in the *Sha'abi* form reveals his unique expertise and talent in conveying vivid and timeless images by using the modern yet traditional idiom of Hilal Dance®.

"*El Saqiyeh*" the waterwheel, is a symbol of the cycles and continuity of life in connection to the land. Alessandro's work explores rural life mapping out its ebb and flow and rhythm. The dancers speak a tale of unity and cohesion with a spiralling language carved gracefully through space revealing at the same time pure dance and archetypal images still alive today in the Delta and Upper Egypt.

With the rich music of The *Sa'id*, (Upper Egypt), in the first piece, Alessandro connects the melancholic and sorrowful drone of the *arghul* (double reed flute) to the groaning of the waterwheel symbolizing human lamentation. The incisive rhythms of the *tablah* mirror the rhythmic work on the land and the dancers movements give us the image of the timeless *Fellahin* (farmers) raising water and tending the fields.

The sounds of horses' hooves sets in motion the music of the *rababa* where the duo with Alaitz and Claudia captures common movements and gestures of *banat el riff* (daughters of the country) portraying the essence of pulsating life alongside the banks of the Nile. The live rhythm of a solo piece with Alessandro and Ibrahim portray the power and intricacy of shared interplay.

In the *Salameya* (flute) piece, the dancers convey how work can evolve into play all the while they are adhering to a progression of rhythmic variations revealing movement aesthetic. Ibrahim el Minyawawi, then draws upon the rhythms of this piece and progresses into his own creative variations in a solo *Tablah*.

The final piece in the programme represents the culmination of the day where the Company advances in unison with the triumphant sounds of the *Mizmar* band. The three dancers work in multi-dimensional space with purity of line in fiery configurations and playful celebration.

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الساقية

El Saqiyeh

يا ساقية دورى

Oh, Saqiyeh Oh, Waterwheel

Turn, turn, turn

And quench the thirst of all

Oh Saqiyeh turn turn and

Extinguish the flames

of my bewildered heart

Oh, Saqiyeh turn

While I sing my yearnings in a

lamenting song

For my beloved who has gone,

Oh Saqiyeh turn turn turn!

Saqiyeh

Iskandar Dance Company



The Waterwheel

Artistic Direction & Choreography:
Dancers:

Alessandro el Bascioni
Alaitz Arregi
Claudia Weitzman
Alessandro el Bascioni
Ibrahim el Minyawawi
Alessandro el Bascioni
Pauline Blackwood

Percussionist:
Costumes Concept:
Couture:

Alaitz Arregi Sudupe, comes from an artistic professional family of singers, dancers and musicians from the Basque country who she toured with in her youth. Later, she decided to find her own artistic expression and began to study different dance forms among them Flamenco and Indian dance. She moved to London to study Hilal Dance in 2000 where she began to study with Alessandro el Bascioni. After three years, she was chosen to be a dancer in Alessandro's new company. Alaitz is also continuing her professional training in the Hilal Art Foundation School.

Claudia Parra Weitzman studied ballet in her childhood and later trained as an artistic gymnast and became a member of the national team in her native country, Chile. Some years later she moved to London and began to study contemporary dance at the Place. She then discovered Hilal Dance in 2001 and began to study with Alessandro el Bascioni. She intensified her training and in 2004 she was chosen to join the Iskandar Dance Company. Claudia continues to train in contemporary dance and is currently working in the professional course of the Hilal Art Foundation School.



Ibrahim el Minyawawi comes from the original school of tablaha players who worked with many popular artists in Egypt. He began his work with Suraya Hilal in London in the late 90's and has continued working with her company ever since. Ibrahim is famous for his diverse knowledge of rhythms and refined "touch" on the tablaha. The collaboration with Suraya Hilal has led to progressions and innovations in his playing and in the rhythms for Hilal Dance. Through his work in the Hilal Art Foundation School and since the creation of *Aseel*, Ibrahim and Alessandro have connected artistically and continue working together on the stage and in teaching.

Iskandar Dance Company

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El Saqiyeh

Iskandar Dance Company



The Waterwheel