



Baraka (a.k.a. Rachel Louise Benbow)

Tribal Fusion and Goth Bellydance Performer and Instructor

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Summary

A powerful and dynamic performer, Baraka has captivated audiences around the globe. Baraka's varied dance background, along with her anthropological studies of ethnic dances, provides a pallet from which she blends her own unique dance style. Students value her as a motivational and articulate instructor who encourages both creativity and inner confidence. Those who witness Baraka's dancing are enchanted and engaged by her artistic vision, professionalism, skill, and elegance.

Performance Highlights

Greece:

Theater Altera Pars, Athens, Jul, 2010
AVLEA Musical Stage, Athens, Jan 2010
Mikis Theodorakis Theater, Athens, May 2009
Babylon Arabic Night Club, Athens, Nov 2008
Alli Ochthi, Athens, Greece, Nov 2008
Jal Mahal Club, Kamena Vourla, Oct 2008

"CID 22nd World Cong.," Dora Stratou Dance Th., Ath., Jul '08
"European Music Day," Technopolis (Gazi), Ath., Jun '08
Booze Cooperativa, Athens, Apr 2008
Chackra, Athens, Mar 2008
Maharaja, Athens, Greece, Jan 2008
Derti Club, Athens, Dec 2007-Jan 2008

United Arab Emirates:

Burj Al Arab, Dubai, Feb 2007

Puerto Rico:

MSC Cruises, Feb 2006

Turkey:

Semester At Sea, Istanbul, Nov 1998

United States:

New York:

Lafayette Grill, New York, Nov 2007
Je' Bon, New York, Oct 2007
LeFigaro Care, New York, Dec 2005-Feb 2006
Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn, Oct 2005 & Mar 2006
HOWL Festival, New York, Aug 2005
Miriam Restaurant, Brooklyn, Jul-Oct 2005
Medina, New York, Dec 2004
Stallas, New York, Sep 2004

Maya Mehane Restaurant, New York, Jun 2004-Jan 2005
Postcrypt Coffee House, Columbia U., New York, Apr 2004
Laila Restaurant, Brooklyn, Mar-Oct 2004
Cupping Room, New York, Feb 2004
Tagine, New York, Nov 2003
"The Real Thing," Casbah Tent Theater, New York, 2003
"Desert Rose Night," China Club, New York, Apr 2003

Washington D.C.

Del Sol, Georgetown, Apr 2004

Maryland:

Middle Eastern Dance Camp, Ramblewood, Aberdeen, Oct 2003
International Awareness Day, Carroll Community College, Westminster, Oct 2002

California:

"Dance of Mourning," AVAZ, Los Angeles, Sep 2002

Pennsylvania:

Casablanca Restaurant, Philadelphia, Oct 2005
"Carnegie on Tap," Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Nov 2002
International Fair, University of Pittsburgh, Sep 2002
Mid-East Dance Expo, Pensic, Coopers Lake, Aug 2001-2005

Ali Baba, Pittsburgh, May 2002
Flux 3 & 5, Pittsburgh, Mar & Oct 2001
Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Jul 2001
Club Café, Pittsburgh, Dec 2000

Cinema/Theater Appearances

"Manchurian Candidate," Paramount Pictures, USA, 2004
"OnQ," WQED, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Apr 2002
"Enchant," Antonian Theater, Carlow College, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Dec 2001
Semester At Sea Voyage Video, Dec 1998

Teaching Highlights

Classes:

Arte Movimento, Athens, Greece, Jan 2011-present
Christina Soub Dance Sch., Athens, Greece Sep 2009-present
Essence Human Space, Athens, Greece, Sep-Dec 2009
CCAC., Pgh., PA, USA, Jun-Dec 2002
Wilkins Sch. & Com. Center, Pgh., PA, USA, 2001-2002
U. of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Sep 2000-May 2001
Semester At Sea, U.S.S. Explorer, Sep-Dec 1998

Workshops:

The Beat of Footprints Studio, Athens, Greece, July 2010
Essence Human Space, Athens, Greece, June 2010
NeoHumanist Center, Athens, Greece, May 2009
Oriental Expressions, Athens, Greece, Apr 2009
CID 22nd World Congress, Athens, Greece, Jul 2008
Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA, Jul 2003
Pensic, Coopers Lake, PA, Aug 2001 & Aug 2002
"Women's Week," YMCA, Fort Hill, PA, Jun 2002
Pittsburgh Whole Health Expo, Monroeville, PA, Apr 2002
Gulf Wars, Lumberton, MI, Mar 2002
Winchester Thurston School, Pittsburgh, PA, Nov 2001
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, Feb 2001

Lectures:

"In the Steps of Salome: An Historical Analysis of Middle Eastern Dance," East End Food Coop, Pittsburgh, PA, Apr 2002
"The History of Middle Eastern Dance," Pensic, Coopers Lake, PA, Aug 2001

Troupe Experience

MorpheS, Athens, Greece, Sept 2009-June 2010
Position: Founder, Choreographer, Core Dancer
Casbah Dance Experience, New York, NY, USA, Mar 2003-Jan 2004
Position: Dancer
Al Raqasat, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Feb-Dec 2002
Position: Founder, Director, Choreographer, Core Dancer

Training

Instructors:

Anahid Sofian, New York, NY, USA, Mar 2004-Aug 2006
Artemis, Silver Sprin, MD, USA, May 2003 & May 2005
Tayyar Akedeniz, New York, NY, USA, Sept-Nov 2003
Morocco, New York, NY, USA, Jan 2003-Mar 2004
AVAS/Dr. A. Shay, Los Angeles, CA, USA, Aug-Sep 2002
Aisha Ali, Los Angeles, CA, USA, Aug-Sept 2002
Robin Friend, Los Angeles, CA, USA, Sep 2002-Nov 2003
Ghawazi, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, Sept 1997-Aug 1999

Independent International Field Studies:

Greece, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Morocco, India

Skills

Styles:

Tribal Fusion, Oriental Dance, Egyptian, Turkish, Moroccan, Tunisian, Armenian, Persian, Khallej/Gulf, Indian

Props:

sword, cane, tea tray, handheld candles, hooka, basket, veil, wings, ribbons

Instruments:

zills, dumbek, spoons, karkaba, bones

Other:

henna/mehndi body art (please see www.barakadance.net for more information)

Other Dance Experience

Argentinean Tango, Jun 1997-present
Salsa, Aug 2006-present
African Dance, Jan-Apr 1996
Ballet, Sep 1994-Jul 1995

Education

MLIS (University of Pittsburgh, 2001, Summa Cum Laude)
BA (University of Pittsburgh, 1999, Summa Cum Laude)
Double Major in History and Anthropology
Double Minor in Art and Religious Studies