

The RAOQ SHARQI Society

Egyptian Dance



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The Raqs Sharqi Society Network

Anna Rimbotti - Italy - (photo - front cover)

Anna Rimbotti first entered the world of music as a child, when she studied piano-forte for eight years. She spent much of her youth in New Delhi where she discovered the oriental approach to music through studying ancient religions and the Sanskrit language. The oriental approach involves a completely different oral tradition of learning and playing music, in which there is no written notation, and it has a wider range of tones and microtones than western traditions. She began her education by learning the Dhrupad song, one of the most developed forms of sacred Music, under the direction of the celebrated Master Zia Fariduddin Dagar. Indian music involves an indissoluble bond between voice, instrument and dance and consequently Anna became involved in forms of body expressions such as Bharata Natyam and Kathak.

Later, back in Europe, Anna studied several popular Arabic dance forms and attended many workshops given by famous teachers such as the Algerian Elhadi Sheriffa from the Bolshoi Theatre, and the dancer and scholar Aisha Ali, whose music recordings and videos are such precious documents of dance for us all! Subsequently Anna's friendship with Suraya Hilal gave her an opportunity to study Raqs Sharqi and she trained with Suraya for over five years in Florence, London, Brussels and Amsterdam. Anna's unique expressive qualities in performance and workshops are also partly due to her collaboration with Beatrice Grognaud, principal of Tarab in Bruxelles and Cairo, and with Mohammed Morad, leader of "The Musicians of the Nile" in Luxor.



Anna dances the Sharqi (Classical) form.

In 1990, she founded her first working group, with the dual purpose of studying the techniques and interpretations of classical and popular Egyptian dance, as well as deepening knowledge of the cultural aspects of its history and future development: her Centre 'Fonun' was established in 2000 as a foundation aiming to preserve and develop this fascinating and ancient form of art-expression, which is now being lost even in Egypt, its original home. In 1999 Anna became an Associate of the Raqs Sharqi Society.

Since 1997, Anna has taught a pioneering male group, and this has also enriched her own dance style. She pays special attention to working with the unique energy of each individual body, so dancing on stage is done with both humility and pride.

Her long research into Sufi traditions and sacred or trance dances has also influenced the way she expresses the physical and spiritual aspects of dance. "As we age, our bodies become more and more fragile and vulnerable, like ancient armour that gets damaged and punctured in places. But our spirit, as a real essence of everlasting life, radiates out through these punctures while we are dancing."

"What need have I for this?
What need have I for that?
I'm dancing at the feet of my Lord,
All is blessed, all is blessed" (*Shakti*)

To find out about classes and workshops with Anna please contact her on:
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