

CAREER PATH OF NAWAL AÏT BENALLA

CHOREOGRAPHER & CO-DIRECTOR OF CIE LA BARAKA / LA CHAPELLE

Of Franco/Moroccan origin, Nawal began dancing at the age of 11 and understood very quickly that it would be her vocation. She rubbed shoulders with the great classical repertoire to begin her professional career at the age of 19. In 1997, she chose to settle in Paris and joined the Armstrong Jazz Ballet to work with great jazz figures and choreographers, Matt Mattox, Jeffrey Carter, Georges Momboye & Wayne Barbaste...

His debut takes him as much to theater, yoga, opera or electronic music. She was chosen by the famous DJ Laurent Garnier for his UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR world tour, worked with Jacques Weber as a dancer and actress in Cyrano de Bergerac. She performed at the Théâtre du Châtelet in several productions including LES TROYENS, Critics' Prize, directed by Yannis Kokkos. Passionate about transmission, she obtained her State Diploma at the Center National de la Danse in Paris in 2005.

Then in 2006, she joined the Compagnie La Baraka, following a national audition bringing together more than 750 candidates. Between 2006 and 2017 she danced in more than 6 productions of the company on international stages. Her qualities as a performer are particularly hailed in the Washington-Post «you couldn't take your eyes of here» (March 2009). In addition to her activity as a dancer, she attends the choreography Abou Lagraa : Closing Ceremony of the Festival Panafrican of Algiers (2009) ; NYA for the Contemporary Ballet of Algiers (2010) ; WAHADA for the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève (2018).

Between 2014 & 2017, Abou & Nawal imagine a new territory for dance in Ardèche. In 2018, they inaugurated the establishment of La Baraka at La Chapelle Sainte-Marie. A true gem of 17th century baroque art in Annonay (1 hour from Lyon). Designed as a small « Villa Medicis », La Chapelle, La Baraka's place of residence, welcomes dance companies from all over the world. The company is developing a vast project to raise awareness of dance, for all audiences.

Within La Baraka, she initiates many projects, defending the idea that art and social commitment are inextricably linked, such as : le « Pont Culturel Méditerranéen » (the « Mediterranean Cultural Bridge »), supported by the Algerian and French Ministry of Culture; « Femmes sur le devant de la scène (« Women on the front of the stage ») as part of the fortnight for gender equality or since 2019 « Premier(s) Pas » (« First(s) Steps »), co-developed with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations.

Nawal felt the need to choreograph at 38 years old. She was immediately supported by the Maison de la Danse de Lyon for her first piece DO YOU BE (2015). Then PREMIER(S) PAS (2020), a creation quickly praised by critics, both for the choreographic writing and the musical innovation. Nawal has collaborated on the writing of music, since its beginnings, with the musician and composer Olivier Innocenti. In 2022, his latest creation ON YOUR SHOULDERS is also praised by national and international critics. The piece opens the Mainz International Dance Festival in Germany and the season of the Silvia Monfort Theater, Paris (October 2023).