

Caledon East resident heading up Follow Your Heart at Harbourfront

By Bill Rea

Follow Your Heart, a production of Evolution Dance Theatre, in Toronto will be opening at Harbourfront Centre's Fleck Dance Theatre May 8.

It will be the world premier of a multi-media extravaganza with more than 40 artists on stage conducting a journey into the human spirit. It boasts spectacular costumes, as well as a compelling love story, gorgeous music and stunning dance ? ranging from traditional belly dance to jazz to hip hop and more ? Follow Your Heart tells an inspiring story of love and struggle, rooted in the rich traditions of Middle Eastern dance and culture.

And it's to star Caledon East resident Teria Morada in the role of Almaza.

Morada is a multi-talented performer, known as a dancer, choreographer, singer and actor, who has been performing since she was three.

?I do act, but it's not something I do all the time,? she observed, although she will be doing it in this show.

?This is my first big production with Evolution,? she commented.

There is an emphasis on the empowerment of women in the story, in which a modern Middle Eastern woman Almaza is in love with Jivan, a traditional man in modern-day Toronto. It is a love story that embraces both taboos and long-established customs.

?It's a traditional story,? she said. ?It's a story that's been heard many times before.?

As well as being a performer, Morada is also an accomplished Canadian Rhythmic Gymnastics Champion. Her work has taken her all over the world, performing and choreographing, and she has studied and performed a wide variety of dance styles. Her accomplishments include being a two-time Junior Canadian Rhythmic Gymnastics Champion, five-time Provincial Champion and National Team Member. She contributed choreography for Canada's 2012 Olympic Team and shared the stage with them at their gym club's year-end event in 2011.

Morada is also the founder of Azucar Picante Entertainment, through which her dancing, singing and choreography were featured in the L.A.'s Best Dancer's Revue at the Alex Theatre and The Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles, The Tropicana Cuban Cabaret (Canada Edition), Moulin Rouge, Rio, Alma de Fuego, Mosaic International Shows in Hollywood, a Poker Kings event in Dublin, Ireland featuring world class darbuka player, Issam Houshan.

Naturally, dance has been a very important part in Morada's life.

?I think I was just born that way,? she said, commenting she's in tune with all types, including tap, belly-dancing, etc. ?I'm very happy when I dance, and sing.?

She said she became interested in belly-dancing when she was living in Los Angeles. A friend got her to give it a try.

?I started getting good at it,? she recalled. ?It kind of fit with me. It kind of fit with my body type.?

Follow Your Heart runs from May 8 to 11 at Harbourfront Centre's Fleck Dance Theatre.

Morada said the show will be performed again in September, but in a different theatre.

?I'm staying here for a while,? she said.

Tickets for Follow Your Heart can be obtained by calling 416-973-4000 or visit www.EvolutionDT.ca

