

## Interview with Boženka – Update: August 2018

*I am very honoured to present to you this interview with Boženka, a brilliant coach and mentor, and one of my favourite performers in Oriental Dance. We talk about Boženka's current plans, her upcoming projects, and living in Crete. She also shares with us her favourite moment in dance, gives us a bit of insight into her creational process, and tells us more about the DancEscapade event we will be co-hosting for the second time in her home town Plakiás, Crete (GR) in May 2018. Enjoy! - Khalida*

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Bellydance Superstar Boženka is an [award-winning](#), internationally acclaimed dancer performing and teaching worldwide. Her distinguishing elegance and her classic and earthy technique has elevated Boženka to superstar status. Charismatic yet unpretentious she is globally loved and admired as one of the most sought out instructors in the art of belly dancing.

See Boženka's website at [www.bozenkadance.com](http://www.bozenkadance.com)



**K: How are you doing right now?**

B: I have a strong desire to teach and dance and feel ready to get back into the swing of things after this holiday break.

**K: Please tell us about how your love for Oriental Dance came about.**

B: In a nutshell I owe it all to a few artist friends that opened my eyes, ears and mind to this artform. A friend had me listen to a Natacha Atlas CD that I loved from the first time I heard it and another friend showed me where to sign up for classes. That studio would later on become my own!

**K: What other movement/dance forms did you enjoy before discovering Oriental Dance? What did you like about them?**

B: Just about anything! But my two favorite dance forms remain Flamenco and Oriental. What I love about these two dance forms is the versatility in improvisation and how each dancer can express something completely unique and inimitable.

**K: How do you go about 'creating dances'? What is your process?**

B: I listen to the music and dance it in my head (internally) and pick out the parts I think I will want to keep. I do this several times and then move to it, applying my mental improvisation, physically, to see what actually works. Slowly, I start to lay out what fits best. Simultaneously, images emerge and I also take note to how the piece makes me feel; what emotion it evokes. This is not a process that repeats itself identically each time. Sometimes, movement comes first and I place it inside a song so that it fits the timing of the piece. This only pertains to choreography though because when improvising, I know the music but allow the movement to be spontaneous. It's actually challenging to put into words because it sounds simplified and it is not. It is a very complex process.

**K: What advice would you give beginning dancers and/or your younger self?**

B: When asked this question, I always advise "beginners" to enjoy the learning process and not to rush or skip through elements (props, rhythms, music theory, etc.). I believe that it is a luxury to take one's time learning a new craft, and if you are lucky to have a good mentor/teacher by your side, take everything you can from them. Generous teachers are real gems. Another piece of advice to dancers at any level is not to hold back in class and to dance full out even while learning.

**K: What do you love most about teaching?**

B: Learning. I learn and grow so much when I teach.

**K: If you had to choose, what would you describe as your favorite moment in dance up till now? Why?**

B: There are many priceless moments in my 20 year dance career that have made every sweat and tear worth it. I will share a recent one; performing pregnant without anyone in the audience knowing (because I did not show yet) and feeling that I was not dancing alone. Dancing with my "child" and feeling whole and elated was one of the nicest feelings of my life, let alone my dance career. But that's just one!

**K: What do you love most about living in Crete/Greece?**

B: I feel closer to nature and to humanity living here. Crete is not superficial as the city I grew up in can be. Miami is still dear to my heart, but I needed to be here in Crete where I can breathe fresh air, not have to deal with traffic and feel like I can leave my door unlocked! It's a more wholesome life here for me.

**K: What are the projects/ideas you are currently working on?**

B: Firstly, there's [DancEscapade with Khalida](#) this May and I'm looking forward to that very much because I have hosted weeklong retreats and 10 day intensives on Crete before, but this concept is new in that it is a dance weekend geared towards all levels of dance and focusing on a fun filled and inspiring learning experience. It promises to be short, sweet and intense!

I am also now hosting instructors with their own groups to train with me on Crete. These are custom designed retreats and they fit each group's individual requests. This work is exciting for me because it gives me a chance to work based at home while offering dancers something different to their usual setting and routine. My studio is on the beach and Crete is a very inspiring place. The space lends itself for creation and growth on many levels.

Next [Dance Lab is September 17-24, 2017](#), and for those of you who are not familiar with this project, it is a week long cultural dance exchange here in my home studio on Crete. I work very closely with a dozen dancers that come from different countries to train with me and receive very personal feedback on their dance. The Dance Lab is a space where pieces start their creative process and some dancers leave with several projects to work on at home. I like to focus on training dancers to dance from the inside out as I call it. The work that happens within, shines through in your dance. Therefore, we work deep. I'm passionate about sharing my aesthetic of movement and my vision and the dancers that come to study with me are seeking that.

Aside from what is happening at home in my studio I have started booking myself for travel again and will be participating in some festivals in 2017-2018. For that information, you can go to [www.bozenkadance.com/events](http://www.bozenkadance.com/events)

*Note: For more information on Boženka's Dance Lab please email [bozenkainfo@gmail.com](mailto:bozenkainfo@gmail.com)*

**K: Tell us more about the DancEscapade weekend you are hosting in Plakiás, Crete this May. What were your reasons for creating this event?**

B: As a teacher and mentor, I aim to create space where I can share my knowledge and also motivate my students that are at a higher level and looking for the next project where they too can share their knowledge and grow from the experience. I also wanted to share the beauty of the South of Crete where I am lucky to live and have a beautiful dance space. I know what this place does to me when I connect with it's beauty and focus on dance. I wanted to create something where dancers could take a few days off and come and explore and learn.

I am so very excited that the first two DancEscapade editions are with [Khalida](#) and that together, in a discussion about our dreams and direction in dance, this idea was born. Khalida is a hardworking and brilliant artist with so much to share and I just know that this weekend is going to be magic because she attracts like-minded people. Khalida and I are going to share dance and our experiences and so will each one of the attendees. I can't wait!

**K: Why would you advise dancers to come to the DancEscapade weekend?**

B: To take a weekend to be in a beautiful setting, taste amazing food, dance in wonderful harmony, share and learn a lot! Why not?! Crete is my home and it is a safe and welcoming place. Even if you come alone, you will be taken care of and I assure you, you will make friends. I wait for you here!

*Note: Find out more about Boženka and Khalida's [DancEscapade Event here](#).*

**Video: Boženka performing at Egyptian Dream festival in Vienna, Austria 2015**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDCDP4GZjO8>

*Boženka's website: [www.bozenkadance.com](http://www.bozenkadance.com)*

*Khalida's website: [www.khalidadance.com](http://www.khalidadance.com)*