



ABOUT HARAKE DANCE COMPANY

We think that anyone can be a dancer. We want to create an environment where we match a trained body and an untrained body in an honest and real space that creates a beautiful combination between freedom and creation.

Because we believe that what you can do is what you can be.

The name Harake

In Arabic, *harake* has two definitions. The first is “movement.” The second, is “accent.” In our language we have accents, for example *fatta*, *kasra*, and *sukun*, which provide the short vowel sounds for our words. If you see a word without accents, without *harake*, you can't read it. You can't understand the true meaning.

So just like the accents help you understand a word, our movements infuse every dance with a deeper meaning. When we dance, we don't just move randomly. We have a purpose, we have a message, we are trying to communicate something real and true.

The people that form Harake

We are a company of professional dancers, composers, and artists. We are all united to make powerful dance pieces that combine the best elements of Eastern and Western dance styles, and create a lasting impression on the world. Our cultural home is Syria, and most of our dancers are Syrian. Right now we are living in exile from our country, but we don't think of ourselves solely as refugees. We were dancers long before the war, and we will be dancers long after.

How Harake was formed

The idea of Harake came to our founder Mohammed Diban just after he crossed the border into Germany. He thought: *my friends and I, we're professional dancers and choreographers, but now we're all spread out because of the war. We could make a dance company here in Germany, so that we can keep dancing, and share our perspectives on dance.* But then the reality of his situation took over. He was placed in a small German town, away from his wife and friends, and spent a year without any thoughts in his head. He just sat, smoked, and waited for his residency papers.

The next summer, a kind of reunion brought Mohammed and fifteen of his friends, to Berlin. One of their friends, another dancer, had passed away. They came from all around Europe to make a dance film for him. It felt so good to dance, and to be together again. Some of the dancers, Mohammed included, decided to stay in Berlin.

They worked small projects together over the fall and winter, but it was disorganized, the dancers were busy navigating

their new European lives, and everything kept getting delayed. One February night, Mohammed sat by the river, afraid that it was all for nothing, that they would never do anything.

Then some of his team members sat down beside him. They began to talk. They talked for hours, and days. They talked with German dancers, with new friends they had made, with other artists, musicians, filmmakers. They returned to his original idea. *We should start a dance company here. But who are we? What are we trying to do? Why?*

They asked around, brainstormed, researched. Then they realized: *We have everything we need. We can do this.*

The company was officially registered in April, 2017 and we have been moving every day since.

How we work

Harake is a dance company. We have dancers trained in Arabic folk, Contemporary, Ballet, Modern, Jazz, and Hip Hop, and our work combines all these styles. We make our own projects and production. We also love collaborating with other artists, musicians, dance companies and filmmakers from all over the world. We think there is beauty in cross-cultural collaboration, for example a contemporary dancer from South America dancing to a very old traditional Arabic song.

We are happy using our dancers to help realize someone else's artistic vision, but we have criteria for the projects we engage in: they must be inspired, and they must have a deeper meaning. In our company, there is a reason for every motion, and a history behind it. The people and organizations we work with also must share this desire for dance to be meaningful and thought-provoking. And we must interact through a common language of mutual respect and open communication.

Dreams and Visions

We dream of communicating our culture and philosophy through the highest quality dance productions, which we then share with the world. We want to join in the conversations which Maurice Béjart, Pina Bausch and Akram Khan have been having for years. We hope to have productions where the audience is fully engaged with both their mind and spirit, and to teach classes where our students emerge feeling like they are really dancers.