

STRIP TEASE

Meet Syracuse's hottest theatrical
performers, Salt City Burlesque

By Rachel Simon ♦ Photography/Illustration by Laura Kopp





Syracuse is filled with different places to go and things to do, but it also has some hidden gems that we may not know about. Our newest find is the Salt City Burlesque troupe & variety show production located in Syracuse, NY featuring performance artists.

Talia Shenandoah, otherwise known as "Harlow Holiday," is the director at Salt City Burlesque, which she founded in 2015. The group performs roughly every other month, and its next show, "Pop Culture Revue," will be May 19 at Jazz Central.

In her lifetime, Shenandoah has seen many Burlesque productions come and go. She describes the city's Burlesque scene: "Syracuse is a great place for burlesque because it's a progressively artsy city. There were burlesque shows in town decades ago."

The troupe performs every 2-3

months. The burlesque troupe sought to educate the public on the art form while sticking to vaudevillian roots in a high-end variety show. Its production incorporates live music, dance, comedy, and acrobatics alongside a classic striptease.

Holiday says their audience is diverse, with "young people, older adults, theater fans, artistic and cutting-edge types, couples, and believe it or not; our biggest fan base is largely made up of women!" She sees regulars and new faces alike at every event. "Our performers and show are diverse as is our crowd," she says. Their shows are usually marketed toward the 21 and up crowd, but they do their fair share of 18 plus events as well to gain a larger audience of people to enjoy the shows.

She says her experience working with Salt City Burlesque has been both rewarding and overwhelming.

As time goes on, the troupe aims to be bigger and do better, constantly trying to outdo themselves. "There is a demand for burlesque entertainment in CNY, for sure. We are often asked about or told we should do a monthly show." However, Shenandoah is content with the current amount Salt City Burlesque performs. She says she prefers focusing on quality over quantity of shows. "Someday we may be more active, but for now, we choose to dedicate our time and resources to ensuring our art is polished, our audience is entertained, and that they feel as though there is the value they are getting in return for the money they are spending. They are our priority because without them we have nothing."

Salt City Burlesque makes sure to build relationships with their audiences by mingling and getting to know them during intermissions, after curtain call, and at the

occasional after party. Harlow also says they have some specialties in their sleeves, like their May 18-20 weekend that will be complete with a speakeasy party, cocktails, jazz, and burlesque in a top secret location.

Their most well-known event was their most recent show Fire & Ice Ball II at the Palace Theater. At the event, the audience is encouraged to dress like they are going to a formal ball and hit the town, end their evening celebrating with performers. "Part of the fun of going to a burlesque show is joining in the fun and glam — getting dapper or dolled up knowing you're here to have a great time," Shenandoah says. Salt City Burlesque is a unique, exciting and entertaining place where not only the performers but the audience can step out of their comfort zones. ■