

# CINCO DE MAYO

## SPECIALS

MAY 3 - 5



PARK PRIME

### CINCO DE MAYO PRIX FIXE MENU \$60

Choice of Entrée:  
Jalapeño Lime Filet or  
Red Snapper Veracruz

Open Daily at 5PM

Reservations at OpenTable.com



### 3 TACOS \$12.99 ROCKIN' BURRITO \$12.99

### CARNE ASADA PLATE \$15.99

### CHURROS WITH VANILLA ICE CREAM \$5

## KENTUCKY DERBY — DRINK SPECIAL —

SATURDAY, MAY 4

\$5 MINT JULEPS

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& Center Bar



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## ART OF THE STATE

BY MARK EARNEST



*Empress* aims to show female empowerment through dance, aerial feats and comedy.  
COURTESY/ROGUE WORX

## Powerful women

### Empress

In the past few years, it may feel like perceptions about women and their role in society and art have been thrown back a decade or two—or three.

A new collaborative stage show in Reno called *Empress* wants to send it back to modern times and throw a light on the true strength of women in the culture—and throw some shade on those misconceptions.

*Empress*, a show that's running through May 23 at the BlueBird, is doing this through burlesque, an art form that has old-fashioned connotations. There is something subversive going on, though.

"There are elements of striptease in the show, for sure, but it's not gratuitous," said Sarah Sperber, owner of Rogue Worx, an entertainment production company that is co-producing the show. "It's all tasteful."

*Empress* is a collaboration between Rogue Worx and the Siren Society, a performing artist group that has been creating its own aerial shows in Reno-Tahoe since 2011, as well as touring work for the past three years with UK musician Troy Boi.

Rogue Worx started this January, although Sperber has worked in promotions in Reno before, including the Reno Aerial Fest in 2016. Currently, the group is providing cirque-style specialty acts for Lex Nightclub at the Grand Sierra Resort.

All that experience has led to a multi-discipline show. Sperber said that *Empress* aims to show different facets of female power through dance, aerial performance and comedy.

"We have everything from women shown in control of money to the divine feminine, women who are the creators of birth and life," Sperber said. "It's a really impressive display. We have some aerial acts that will make your jaw drop, that really show the physical strength of women, as well as the cutesy flappers you would expect."

Sperber and Lina Maria, owner of the Siren Society, said the show will also feature comedic hosts with an edge that fits the show's premise: Vivian, who owns the Whiskey Sirens burlesque troupe; and Savannah Jewel, a drag queen who hosts when national drag acts perform at Faces.

"Savannah is hilarious," Maria said. "And very fashionable," Sperber added.

"Vivian does get kind of raunchy, but she's perfect for the Reno vibe and how gritty the city can be," Sperber said. "One theme you'll hear her talk about is being body positive. She's a bigger girl and proud of that and is very comfortable in her own skin."

To pull all of this together has taken some feats of coordination beyond just aerial hoops. Sperber and Maria have been working on the show since January, with Maria working on the aerial portion and Sperber handling the dance choreography. For the past two months, lots of rehearsals at various spots around town have been taking place to refine elements of the show.

The fact that it's taking place at a nightclub instead of a theater also gives *Empress* a different feel than the stage shows of yore.

"I've done shows at the BlueBird before," Maria said. "It's a very intimate venue, and you really feel like you are connecting with the audience. You can really interact with them because they are right there in front of you. There are also so many different levels there, which is really cool. They have this little green room that has an opening that you can see from the stage, and we've used that before. It's fun to have so many different places to play." □

*Empress* takes place at 8 p.m. on May 2-4, 9, 16 and 23 at the BlueBird, 555 E. Fourth St. Get tickets and more details at thebluebirdreno.com or rogueworx.net.