

Erica Shaffer and James Paola - A Celebration of Love

Halloween is usually thought of as a day of practical jokes and preparation for a night of scary tricks. For Erica Shaffer and James Paola, Halloween was an evening filled with nothing but treats as they gathered their friends and family together to witness their marriage. Erica and James requested that their guests attend in costumes of their choosing. The costumes ranged from devils to queens to roaring 20s flappers and everything in between.

From the first moment the guests arrived at an exclusive West Hollywood hotel they knew that this would be no ordinary wedding. As the room began filling with the strains of Albinoni's *Adagio in D Minor* a ballerina twirled with perfect timing and grace. A rhythmic gymnast followed performing with sheer precision to John Lennon's *Imagine* as the congregation looked on anxiously waiting to see what would come next. The bridal attendants soon took their places as the moment everyone had waited for had arrived.

As double doors swung open a stilt walker entered dressed as a butterfly and when she neared the end of the aisle, the music changed to The Beatles classic *In My Life*. On the arms of both her mother and father, Erica was escorted up the aisle to her waiting groom. She was dressed in a beautifully flowing champagne organza gown and carried a magnificent bouquet of champagne, cardinal red, sunset and salmon colored roses. As the ceremony commenced Erica and James listened and sometimes laughed while their family and friends with prayers and wishes from the Apache and Irish cultures blessed them with love and happiness.

In keeping with the festive mood, the congregation was further entertained by one of Erica's friends singing Cirque Du Soleil's *Nostalgie* from "O" accompanied by a solo violinist and the bride's cousin belly dancing with a sword on her head. As the minister pronounced James and Erica husband and wife her friend sang a medley of hits by Bob Marley as the happy couple sealed their union with a kiss.

The reception proved to be as equally spectacular as the wedding ceremony. Guests were then treated to a four course sit-down dinner featuring a vegetarian menu. Human statues lined the walls as Erica and James shared their first dance. It was truly an evening filled with laughter, tears of joy and incredible love.

Erica Shaffer was born and raised in San Diego, California. She is a classically trained ballerina and holds both a BFA and MFA in Acting and Directing. Erica has appeared as the lead actress in fifteen independent films and dozens of national television commercials. Most recently, Erica has just completed filming a pilot being produced by Aaron Spelling and Mel Gibson called ***The Clubhouse***, which will begin airing on CBS. While ***The Clubhouse*** is on CBS you can also see Erica on not one but two other series: as the host of the Travel Channel's new series ***Vacation Challenge*** and the lead in SoapNet's ***Office Romance***.

Editors Note: Look for complete coverage and photos in the next issue of Chicago Bride!