

SAMEDA

San Diego Area Middle Eastern Dance Association



Monthly News
December 1998



See cover story on page 6

SAMEDA Monthly News

the official publication of the
San Diego Area Middle Eastern Dance Association

Send membership renewals (\$20.00 per year), ads, and flyers (see back cover for advertising rates) to:

SAMEDA
P.O. Box 40378
San Diego, CA 92164-0378

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
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| Vice-President: | Meleah | (619)280-8424 |
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| Secretary: | Theresa Freese | (619)298-0849 |

We need your announcements, events notices, reviews, articles, photos, artwork, and any other information you wish to share. SAMEDA accepts *original material* submitted by the author/artist with a valid return address. *Mail* submissions to:

Lynn Perry, Editor
4479 Bancroft
San Diego, CA 92116

OR e-mail submissions to lynnard8@hotmail.com

Submission Guidelines

Submissions deadline is the 12TH of each month. Due to occasional space constraints, non-time-sensitive items may be held over till the next issue.

Submissions should be typed or *legibly* handwritten—preferably double-spaced with adequate margins. Submissions on disk are acceptable (even preferred) in PC and Mac platforms. Disks will be returned if you include a postpaid mailer. Due to the new streamlined format, we accept typeset material *only* for advertisements.

If you scan your own photos, please *do not* halftone them—scan them as “grayscale” (16 grays) or “black and white photo” in your scanning program.



Hello everyone! I just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Lynn Perry, and I was one of the founding members of SAMEDA (hmmm, I just dated myself) and have danced under the names of Sabah and Anankah throughout San Diego quite awhile back.

Please bear with me while I learn the ins and outs of editing and typesetting this book of a newsletter. Each month I promise to get better and faster, so please be kind.

I thank Meleah, Marulah, and Susan Teal on giving me this opportunity. Again, be kind these first couple of months until I get up to speed. So everyone, you can reach me at my email: lynnard8@hotmail.com and also continue to send information to the P.O. box.

Lynn



The Art of Takseem

Part 1

by Elizabeth Artemis Mourat

A takseem is an improvised piece of music or dance that has no rhythm. It is the musicians' solo part of a song or it may be the entire song. Some people are intimidated by the lack of structure that exists without a rhythm. There is no reason to feel this way, but rather you should look at the situation as a liberating experience. It is the very lack of structure that can free the musician and the dancer to draw upon their own uniquely personal artistic selves and styles. Ideally, a musician who gives you a takseem will be playing from his or her heart (please note: I will use the masculine when referring to musicians. I do not wish to slight the many fine female musicians in doing so. It is merely less cumbersome this way). This is his self, his spirit, he is offering to you. And in turn, it is your self and spirit that you give back. You are both unencumbered by an imposed rhythm or by other musicians. It is quite intimate. If rather than dreading this experience, you can alter your attitude towards it, the end result will be positive, powerful and breathtaking.

I admit that I am offering ideals. We all know musicians who sleep walk through their show (and yours). We know musicians who require a stethoscope to find any signs of life. If we are to be truly honest, we know dancers like that, too. Sometimes when we are tired, bored, ill or troubled, we feel like that ourselves. But what separates the men from the boys, the women from the "goyles", and the professionals from the novices; is that despite how we feel in those times, we persevere and give a good show anyway. In fact, the show often has a healing effect on your feelings. Your takseem is a reflection of yourself and your feelings, so there is nothing wrong with dancing those emotions - your pathos, your pain or sorrow. During your takseem, you will look silly if you have a rehearsed grin splattered on your face. You will not look real. I am not suggesting that you collapse into tears, but yielding to your feelings is all right as long as you maintain your control.

I would like to address the issue of choreographing versus improvising a takseem. If you are dancing to taped music or to a musician you know very well, you can choreograph a routine. I advise against it because this is a living, breathing, emotional art and your dancing should change as you change. I strongly recommend against even trying to choreograph something to live music. Your choreography may not fit what the musician decides to play that night. If the musician is aware and if he is doing his job, then he will be playing from his heart during his takseem and and you will be dancing from your head. It will not "click". When you dance a takseem with your

musician, it is a conversation. He is talking to you with his music and his music will say different things to you at different times. You will be talking to him with your dance and you will not say the same thing every time, either. Enjoy the spontaneity. This is "jamming". Do not deny yourself the opportunity for a spontaneous exchange between the musician and yourself. Let the music come inside you and dance the music. It is his most intimate musical self and your most intimate dancing self. Fill yourself with it. At the risk of sounding cliché, I tell you to become one with it. It is almost like making love to the music with your dance. It can be an intensely personal experience. Listen to the music and it will seem to tell you what movements will fit. Do not fight the music but rather go with it, lay with it, follow it, and ride on it. This is the art of takseem. If you keep these things in mind, you will be amazed at how alive, exciting and vibrant your takseems will become.

Samedia Performer Directory

(all are in the 619 area, unless noted)

DANCERS

- Aleia (760) 930-9893
- Ana 660-6965
- Morwenna Assaf ... (760) 433-2276
- Cyriana (909) 987-1670
- Jamila 466-8233
- Jinaan (760) 471-8747
- Luisa 299-1129
- Mariah (760) 727-4545
- Marula 466-2272
- Meleah 280-8424
- Nora 457-7741
- Pamela 299-7337
- Sahar (760) 433-9993
- Ninah Sahar 561-5674
- Sahra Saeeda (909) 359-6782
- Salimah 466-7849
- Sanura (760) 630-7063
- Scherazade 581-0135
- Sohaila (760) 743-7501
- Theresa 298-0849

DRUMMERS

- Walid Assaf .. (760) 433-2276
- Var Daghdevirian
..... (909) 987-1670
- Dave Dhillon 284-5367
- Randwolf 788-1447

Cover Story

Focus on Dave Dhillon

Those of us who have been a part of the belly dance community in San Diego have recognized the many talents of Dave Dhillon for years. As a regular drummer at *Cyrena's Extravaganza* and the *Bedouin Bazaar*, he delights audiences and keeps dancers on their toes with his exciting rhythms. For those of you who are just discovering the dance in San Diego, you will surely want to read on and get to know this fascinating musician.

It was the 1950's in California. Beatniks were 'in' and playing bongos could make a guy the coolest cat around. So, Dave Dhillon started hanging around the Zenda Ballroom in downtown Los Angeles and bongo clubs in San Diego, absorbing Latin, Caribbean and American dance beats.

In 1996, Dave met the manager of San Diego's Vacation Village, where there was a nightly belly dance show. Before he knew it, he was yelling, "habibi!", and learning dumbek 'cold turkey' on stage with a Turkish kanoun player, Lemi Pasha and belly dancers from Hollywood such as Aisha Ali, Princess Nadia, Zenuba, Lena the Persian Kitten, and Mylene Kay.

Over the years, clubs and dancers came and went, but the legendary ones still remain bright in memory. Dave drummed at Mantiki Village, The Four Winds, Istanbul Restaurant, King Luis Lounge (with oud player and owner of Haji Baba's, Antoine Hage), The Greek Tycoon, and Grecian Gardens. Dave ran his own club in the 1980's called The Yankee Pasha in uptown San Diego, and delivered over 400 "bellygrams" for Live Wires telegram service with Aidah Bennu, Habiba, and Vanessa. Recently he learned and played the African djembe with Meleah's Urban Vibrations dance group all over Southern California, featuring Meleah and Desiree, and has played at numerous Arab functions between here and Mexico City.

I sat with Dave and asked him about two of San Diego's most famous belly dancers, Delilah and Sultana. He spoke about his fond memories of working with them in the late 1970's at *Richard Barham's Harem Caravan Belly Dance Revue* in Hotel Circle. Barham (a Los Angeles oud player) featured a variety of international music there and dancers by listening to their requests and needs. During this three and a half year period, Dave also worked with Alexandria, Dezerae, Katarina, and Romany.

With a rich history of playing for such amazing dancers, including the ones mentioned, and others like Julia, Cyrena, Cyriana, and Aziza, I wanted to know what Dave feels makes a good Oriental dancer. He was quick and direct: costuming, zill playing, and personality. he continued by explaining that "personality" means that the dancer needs to have variety. She doesn't have to have all the technique in the world or be the best dancer in her area, but she does need to create a connection with the audience and the band

through her performance. He exclaimed, "Don't be afraid of the band!" He wonders why dancers do not choose roll models anymore and thinks it is healthy and beneficial for a dancer to watch, observe, and learn from a good roll model in the field.

At present, Dave freelances, always looking sharp in his ethnic fez and richly embroidered vests. He plays mostly private parties, teaches and occasionally works with his favorite impresario, John Bilezikjian. He is a true asset to the San Diego dance community and is appreciated by us all - dancers, musicians, and audiences alike.



Patrons and Donators

A big THANK YOU to the following people who donated funds or services to SAMEDA:

All the teachers & students at the Student Recital

Kizlarkhon at Studio Artemis

By Sianna (Mary Ann C. Bell)

I was lucky. A wish I made in July came true in October. On the last day of Central Asian Dance Camp this year, we all went to the prayer tree and, following an Uzbek tradition, made a wish represented by a piece of silk which we tied to the tree. My wish was to study again with the special guest teacher at the camp - People's Artist of Uzbekistan, Kizlarkhon Dustmukhamedova. (Uzbekistan is a traditionally Muslim country once known as Turkestan: it fell under Russian rule in the middle of the nineteenth century.) Kizlarkhon is one of the world's leading exponents of the classical Central Asian dance form which developed along the Silk Road where Arabic, Turkic, and Persian cultures met and mingled.

My wish was almost immediately granted. The Iranian Community School in Vienna, Virginia was so enchanted by Kizlarkhon when she visited classes there in July that they invited her to perform at their annual show celebrating the Persian autumn festival of Mehregan. Kizlarkhon was the guest artist along with Laurel Victoria Gray, the Silk Road Dance Company, and students of the school. While I was unfortunately out-of-town for the show, I did manage to attend Kizlarkhon's workshop on October 10 and 11.

Once again, I was impressed by Kizlarkhon's incredible ability to communicate. Everything - from precise details like the importance of transferring weight first by bending the knee (plie'), to wonderfully expressive gestures like blowing a kiss - was conveyed immediately, even before we heard the translation of her words. She gave each of us individual attention, adjusting body lines, moving our hands into correct positions while demonstrating the exact foot placement. As Laurel Victoria Gray explained, "just because this is an 'oriental' form does not mean it is lacking in precision. Classical Uzbek dance is as demanding as ballet and takes as many years to truly master." Laurel translated Kizlarkhon's descriptions of the stylistic differences between Khorezm, Bukhara, and Ferghana styles. Both women emphasized the subtle nuances in the movements of the head, eyes and even the size of the steps taken and tied these to the role of women in traditional Islamic culture of the steps taken and tied these to the role of women in traditional Islamic culture and the way this is reflected in the dances of old Turkestan. Kizlarkhon interacted and the way this is reflected in the dances of old Turkestan. Kizlarkhon interacted with us to show how to draw audience response. (If we get this part right - what an impact!)

The workshop was to include the fundamental positions and traveling steps for the three regional styles, training in spins and turns, an introduction to the famous doire dars dance etude and one complete choreography. But Kizlarkhon worked us so hard that we learned two dances. One was a lively piece in the Ferghana style to the song "My Uzbekistan" performed by the famous Yalla Ensemble. The second choreography was a Khorezm dance that was cute and playful, with fluttering bird-like hand movements accentuated by wrist bells. These pieces could be performed as solos, but Kizlarkhon had us practice them as ensemble choreographies with interesting stage formations. It was fun to share this group energy.

My new wish will be for Kislarkhon's return visit next year when she comes back for Persian New Year in March and for the 4th Annual Central Asian Dance Camp in June. There will be more concerts and more classes; I plan to be in the front row for everything! Special thanks to Laurel Victoria Gray for interpreting and for giving us the opportunity with her teacher Kizlarkhon, who is truly a world class artist, and to Artemis for generously donating her studio space.

Sianna is a member of the Maryland Company of Middle Eastern Dancers.



Letters to the Membership

Dear SAMEDA Membership,

Something is really wrong in our community, and I'm talking about how much are we dancers getting paid and treated from most of the restaurant owners in town. No dancer that I know charges less than \$75 for a private show. This kind of gig you just go, do your show on time and for how long you want, and with the music you choose, immediately get paid, get treated with respect, and go home! Very easy.

On the other hand, at most of the restaurants I know in the San Diego area, we are getting paid \$30 for one show and maybe \$50 for two shows. But, this is not the only problem . . . restaurant owners expect us to arrive much earlier before dance time, wait to do our show and stay to entertain customers while they offer to buy us a drink. Well, this is not our job!!

The worst part is when we go to the restaurant and because they have a slow night, they decide to cancel the show and send us back home with no pay. If the restaurant owner is very nice, he might treat you to a drink or some food. It is not our fault if they have a slow night, nor our responsibility to bring customers. The musicians still play on those nights and the waitresses still get paid. They think that because we are independent contractors, we shouldn't get paid when they decide to cancel the show. Let me tell you, that a contract, even when it is verbal, is still a valid contract. If they hire us to do a show and decide to cancel it, that's their problem. Legally they have to pay us. This situation is not only unfair to us, but also for the customers that go to a specific kind of restaurant to see a belly dancer and get cheated.

According to the musicians' association, a musician or a dancer should get paid for a minimum of one hour, even if the show is for only 10 minutes. We have to take in consideration the time that it takes us to get ready and to drive to the place. The minimum we should be getting paid is \$50 for 1 show and \$75 for 2 shows. If we all are strong, that may be done.

If we decide that from 1/1/99 that those will be the rates with no exceptions, and communicate this decision to the restaurant owners, they will have no choice, or they pay us the new rates or they have no show. But what if a couple of dancers undercut? If a couple of dancers do undercut they won't be able to do all the jobs . . . Others are afraid to lose the job, but are we afraid to lose a job that only pays us \$30 if the show is not cancelled, otherwise how many times do we turn down another gig for a night we end up doing and earning nothing?

I think that SAMEDA should be more than an association; a union to protect ourselves from this kind of abuse. I hope to get your support and have a decision on the next SAMEDA board meeting.

Love,
Nora

Welcome to Samedra New Members

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Catherine Norcross | June Jones (Noor) |
| Margaret Deardorf | Susan Dollick |
| Donna Dutton | Rosemarie Wagner (Razil) |
| Amber Harrison (Kall-Inora) | Laura-Annalese Harris (Sa'ida) |
| Tracy Markov | Shayla |
| Lila Haisha-DeForest (Lila) | Vicky Ragousis |
| Richard Steiger | |

Welcome Back to Samedra Renewing Members

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Francena Sherburne | Lisa Pietsch |
| Scottie Schultz | Kathleen Thompson (Alia) |
| Theresa Freese | Mary Ann Nowell (Marula) |
| Stephanie Morris (Sahar) | Valerie Koval (Samira) |
| Erika Novak (Anastasia) | Irma Bowman |
| Anne Curran Rotzler | Dave Dhillon |
| Terri Lynn Wert (Athena) | Helen Kelso (Helen) |
| Sara MacRuari | Elle |
| Linda Sutera (Lintasia) | |

Announcements

- **PLEASE TAKE NOTE:** The deadline for submissions has been changed to the 12th of the month preceding the issue in which your items are to appear! This is necessary due to increased submissions/workload. You must have your events notices and announcements in by the 12th (for example, send in December issue items by November 12th), or they will be held over until the following issue.
- **Theresa's** Monday class is on holiday break beginning December 21. Class will resume on January 4th.
- **Sohaila** has beautiful costumes for sale. Beginning through professional level, and Egyptian scarves - call (760) 743-7501

- **The SAMEDA Christmas Party** is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 13TH. Location and time to be set.
- **Xzayla is looking for solo dancers** for a show on Friday, December 18TH. This is an excellent opportunity for intermediate to advanced students! For details, call (619) 283-6951.
- **Tribal-Style Belly Dance Troupe is forming** in San Diego with Rebecca. All levels of dancer welcomed. Call (619) 447-1835 or (619) 579-9526 for details, or come to the first meeting on Saturday, November 2ND, at 1:00 PM at Rebecca's Sewer's Resale, 1321 E. Main Street, in El Cajon.
- **Xzayla does Henna Tattooing** at Lestat's Coffee House on Adams Avenue every Saturday night from 7:00-9:00. Donation is \$10.00 for as intricate design as you want! For details, call (619) 283-6951.
- **Teachers:** If you need copies of the Monthly News for your class, please call Meleah, the managing editor, at (619) 280-8424 before the 12TH.
- **Costume Sale** - 4 gently used, well-constructed Egyptian style belly dance costumes. Includes veil. Fits 7-9. Colors: Black with silver, fuschia with silver, emerald green, and aqua. Priced at \$325 each. Leave message at (619) 486-9130.
- **The next SAMEDA Board Meeting** is Sunday, January 10TH, at 1:00 PM at the Meleah's house, 2805 Maple St. in North Park. Call (619) 280-8424 for details. *Everyone is welcome!*

Shows & Special Events

Thursdays - Enjoy Middle Eastern night with Walid Assaf and Tatoon, at the Crete Island Restaurant, at the Oceanside Marina, 258 Harbor Drive South, starting at 7:00pm. Call the restaurant at (760)722-0461 for more info.

January 31 - Art/Dance Academy presents their "After the Holidays Anniversary Performance & Party" at 225 Brooks St. The performance will include C*E*D*A*R's newest works plus guest artists. (Cost is \$6, plus a snack to share). The theme is yet to be announced. Possible Master Class also. Contact Morwenna Assaf for more info. 760-757-4470 after Christmas.

February 28 - This Sunday will be dedicated to "Ibrahim Farrah" for his birthday. There will be a mini-workshop for \$15.00. His method plus a piece of choreography will be taught. The show will have the works of his. This cost will be the usual \$6.00 plus a snack to share or \$20.00 for both. Class is from 12noon to 2:00pm. Performance & party 2:00-5:00pm. Call Morwenna.

Out-of-Town Events

Wednesdays—*Tonya and Atlantis* present their *Original Belly Dance Showcase* from 8:45–11:30 PM at the Los Angeles Harbor Radisson Hotel, 601 S. Palos Verdes St., San Pedro. For show information, call Tonya at (310) 434-3987; for reservations, call (310) 519-8200.

Thursdays—The Mediterranean Kabob Room presents live entertainment with *John Bilezikjian, Var Daghdevirian, Natasha, and Cyrianna*, from 8:00–11:00 PM, 610 S. Myrtle Avenue, in Monrovia. Call (626) 357-0512 or (626) 358-7177 for more information.

➔ **February 28, 1999**—*Angelika Nemeth* presents Algerian-born *Khedoudji Megateli (Khedi)*, from Austin Texas in an *Oriental Technique and Choreography Workshop* from 1:00–6:00 PM, in Costa Mesa, CA. Call Angelika at (949) 786-3111 for details.

➔ **March 13, 1999**—Santa Barbara, CA. UCSB annual Middle Eastern concert of music and dance with guest artist *Laurel Victoria Gray*.

Out-of-State Events

➔ **December 21**—*Laurel Victoria Gray* sponsors a *Winter Solstice Circle Dance Class* at Studio Artemis in Silver Spring, Maryland. Two one-hour sessions at 7:00 and 8:30 PM. Call (301) 585-1105 for details.

➔ **January 9–16, 1999**—*Morocco's Winter Intensive* week-long seminar features guest instructor *Laurel Victoria Gray*. Concert on January 9th. Call (212) 727-8326 for details.

➔ **February 1999**—*Laurel Victoria Gray* sponsors a 9th European Tour - Workshops in Switzerland, Austria, & Germany. Call (301) 585-1105 for details.

➔ **May 14-16, 1999**—U.S. premiere of *Laurel Victoria Gray's "Egyptia"* at Baltimore Museum of Art. Special guest: *Delilah*. Call (410) 235-0100 for ticket information.

Workshops

Nina Sahar Presents - Pre-registration required/limited enrollment. Each workshop is \$20.00/Thursdays from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

12/1098 - Ghawazee Part 1 (Beg. moves & background)

1/14/99 - I have a problem! Taking notes to remember dance steps

2/11/99 - Khaleege Dance (beg. moves & background)

3/11/99 - Getting Ready to Perform (look like a pro even if it's your 1st time)

4/8/99 - Turkish Gypsy Dance moves & background Part 1

Nina Sahara Presents: Performer & Self-Development Series - Once Monthly Thursdays 6:30pm to 8:30pm

2/18/99 - Essence Shamanic Dance, also held on 3/18, 4/15, and 5/20. Dance experience is not necessary, but courage & commitment to self-discovery a must. Explore & understand the many aspects of self. Pre-registration req.

December 13 & 20, 1998 - 2 Sundays with Angelika at the Tony Scaccia Dance Studio in Costa Mesa, CA. 2 hours each Sunday 10:00am to 12noon. Intermediate/Advanced level. Focus: combinations & technique to various rhythms, cymbals & veil. Cost is \$15.00 each class or \$25.00 for both. By reservations only. To schedule call: Angelika Nemeth 949-786-3111.

Angelika Nemeth & the Orange Coast College Dance Dept. will present Algerian born *Khedoudji Megateli (Khedi)*, from Austin, TX, in an *Oriental Technique & Choreography workshop* in Costa Mesa, CA. Cost is \$35.00 in advance by February 21 or \$40.00 at the door. For registration: call Angelika at 949-786-3111 or FAX: 949-654-5745.

March 26-28, 1999 - in Austin, TX. Jeanette Cunningham presents Angelika Nemeth in a workshop and show. Call 512-441-4645.



Delilah



Angelika



Amaya at After Party with Award



Suzy Evans



Final Bow

SAMEDA PERFORMER DIRECTORY

(all are in the 619 area, unless noted)

DANCERS

- Aleia (760) 930-9893
- Ana 660-6965
- Morwenna Assaf .. (760) 433-2276
- Cyriana (909) 987-1670
- Jamila 466-8233
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- Sahra Saeeda (909) 359-6782
- Salimah 466-7849
- Sanura (760) 630-7063
- Scherazade 581-0135
- Sohaila (760) 743-7501
- Theresa 298-0849

DRUMMERS

- Walid Assaf .. (760) 433-2276
- Var Daghdevirian
..... (909) 987-1670
- Dave Dhillon 284-5367
- Randwolf 788-1447



To All Belly Dance Teachers,

Aloha! I'm Yasmin. I just returned to the San Diego area after about 5 years. I've spent the last 2 years on the beautiful, healing island of Kauai in Hawaii.

While I was there, I was a successful dance teacher. I had an incredibly wonderful experience teaching there. I would have to say that it was the most fulfillment I have ever had teaching dance. The girls were all enthusiastic and fun. I loved being a dance mom. I miss my girls very much and enjoyed watching them blossom.

I, unfortunately, had to leave them. So, being the one and only teacher on the island, I had to leave them without guidance. They still get together every week and dance. The live band also still plays for them. They're a great bunch of musicians.

What I'm hoping for is that there might be some teachers who might be travelling to Kauai on vacation. If there is anyone planning a trip to my island paradise and you might want to do a workshop while you are there. Please call me and I'll give you a contact number to set something up. I ask for nothing for myself, only the willing teacher to help inspire and stimulate a great bunch of girls and musicians.

Please call me at 760-630-4302.

*Mahalo nuiloa,
Yasmin (aka Barbara)*



Persians in Paradise: Delilah's Seventh Annual Belly Dance Retreat

By Laurel Victoria Gray

Ranging in age from 18 to 70, the participants at Delilah's 7th Visionary Belly Dance Retreat were a cross-section of women at all stages of life. Some were accomplished professionals, while others were novices with only a few lessons. How wonderfully affirming this was about the role of dance in our lives! There is a place for everyone, regardless of age or experience. I have had the honor of teaching at all of the other major Middle Eastern dance theme camps: Mendocino, Oasis, and of course, the Central Asian camp in Santa Fe. While each has its own wonderful ambiance, all share a comforting sense of comraderie. Perhaps by "going to camp" we abandon all pretense and posing our inner child comes out to play.

And play we did. Most participants had never had a Persian or Russian gypsy dance class, but they were game for it. And this was not only a physical challenge but a mental one too, since these two forms not only have vastly different movement vocabulary, but different demeanors. One day they were expected to be coy yet demure, concentrating on light delicate steps and refined and precise gestures. Then, in the next class, they had to run and lunge and whirl, like proud and temestuous beauties. Enough to cause a case of cultural whiplash!

It was the alchemy of Hawaiian dance and the splendid natural environment that combined to give me fresh insight into Persian dance. My classical Persian etude which provides students with a structured basis is derived from typical dance movements, poetic images, miniature paintings and even Persian architecture. All of these positions draw greatly from Nature. After two decades of Persian dance, I certainly understood this on an intellectual level, but I can honestly say that I did not *know* it on a truly cellular level until I came to Maui.

It began as an experiement. Inspired by the incredible natural beauty of our surroundings as well as the enthusiasm of the students, I suggested we schedule an additional class, an outdoor review session in the basic Persian positions. In order to enhance the experience, we would practice in costume and videotape the event for at-home review. Several students agreed to participate. They brought skirts, veils, and jewelry from which we could improvise Persian-looking garments. I contributed numerous hats and costume pieces.

The transformation was remarkable. I had to look twice to recognize some of the women. Draped in flowing silks, their limbs became more eloquent. The kohl-rimmed eyes flirted more cocquettishly. Instead of Americans on a Hawaiian vacation, they became aristocratic Saffavid ladies, out for a frolic in the private gardens of their estate.

Suleiman joined us, pulling out his *ney* and sitting on a rock to play music for us. We moved slowly and graciously, each gesture flowing seamlessly into the next. Soon I abandoned the framework of the etude and beat to improvise a dance. Magically, the women followed, enraptured by that precious moment in which the dancer and the music fuse into one. Every gesture was suddenly imbued with new meaning. We were truly dancing with nature, as our arms described the trees, the flowers, the vault of heaven, and the gentle breeze. We were not ourselves, but the *houris* of paradise, lured down to earth by the irrevocable command of nature herself.



| Samedra Costumer List | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Aleia | (760) 930-9893 |
| Morwenna Assaf | (760) 433-2276 |
| Athena's Boutique | 221-2920 |
| Cristóbal | 697-9121 |
| Gypsy Wear (Rebecca Long) | 447-1835 |
| Nora Luchs | 457-7741 |
| Scherezade's Souk | 581-0135 |
| Theresa Freese | 298-0849 |
| G.A. Walke | 445-6674 |

Belly Dance Classes

All times are in the evening unless otherwise noted.

North County & Beyond

- Alicia** (760)930-9893
- Turkish/Cabaret-style belly dance M 7:30-9:00
 - Art/Dance Academy, 225 Brooks Street, Oceanside
 - Private coaching by appointment (2)
- Art/Dance Academy** (760)757-4470
- Arabic-style belly dance, beginning T 9:30-10:30a
 - Romatic Gypsy, beginning T 10:30a-12:00
 - Arabic-style belly dance, beginning 6 wks. T 6:00-7:00
 - Arabic-style belly dance, advanced T 7:30-9:00
 - Arabic-style, choreography W 4:30-5:30
 - Romantic Gypsy, beginning W 6:30-8:00
 - Arabic-style, intermediate W 8:00-9:00
 - Specialized belly dancing, beg. to int. Th 7:30-9:00
 - Drumming Th 12:00-1:00
 - Arabic-style belly dance, beginning 6 wks. F 1:00-2:00
 - Arabic-style belly dance, beginning Sa 11:00-12:00
 - Children's basics of ethnic dance Sa 12:00-12:30
 - Children's basics of ethnic dance Sa 12:40-1:30
 - Arabic-style, technique Sa 1:30-3:00
 - Drumming, beginning Sa 3:00-4:30
 - Drumming, intermediate to advanced Sa 4:30-6:00
 - Private coaching by appointment (1)
 - Art/Dance Academy, 225 Brooks Street, Oceanside
- Sohaila** (760)743-7501
- Beginning belly dance M 7:00-8:30
 - Intermediate belly dance T 7:00-8:30
 - Poway Unified school District, (760)748-0010
 - Beginning/Intermediate belly dance W 7:00-8:00
 - Escondido Community Services, (760)839-4691
 - Private coaching by appointment (2)
- Nicki Vaccar** (760)634-3680
- Greek Folk dance M 5:00-6:00
 - Beginning belly dance M 7:00-8:00
 - Earl Warren Jr. High School, Solana Beach (1)
- Kathy Stradley** (909)699-5606
- Beginning belly dance W 6:00-7:00
 - Intermediate belly dance W 7:10-8:10

- Temecula Community Recreation Center, Temecula (1)
- Mariah** (760)630-4262
- Level I belly dance W 7:00-8:15
 - Christy's Rhythm Central, 416 Escondido Ave., Vista (1)
- Angelika Tustin** (Los Angeles area) (949)786-3111
- Beginning belly dance M 6:30-8:00
 - Advanced belly dance M 8:15-9:30

Metro

- Theresa** (619)298-0849
- Beginning through intermediate belly dance M 7:00-8:30
 - Centre City Ballet, 928 Ft. Stockton, Mission Hills (1)
- Luisa** (619)299-1129
- Beginning belly dance w/choreography 8 wks. T 6:30-7:45
 - La Jolla Recreation Center, 615 Prospect St., La Jolla
 - Intermediate belly dance Th 6:15-7:30
 - Dancing Unlimited, 4569 30th Street, North Park
 - Private coaching by appointment (1)
- Meleah** (619)280-8424
- Beginning; foundations of belly dance W 7:30-8:30
 - Int./Adv. technique and combinations W 6:25-7:25
- Centre City Ballet, 928 Ft. Stockton, Mission Hills
- Intermediate technique F 1:30-2:30
 - Taoist Sanctuary, 4229 Park Blvd., North Park
 - Private coaching by appointment (1)
- Elle** (760)293-3243
- 1/7/99 Technique Basics Th 6:30-7:30
 - 1/7/99 Performance Basics Th 7:30-8:30
- Centre City Ballet, 928 Ft. Stockton, Mission Hills (2)
- Jamila** (619)466-8233
- Private coaching by appointment (1)
- Scherazade** (619)581-0135
- Private coaching by appointment (1)
- Vernetta** (619)260-1707
- Beginning belly dance T 6:30-7:30
 - Intermediate belly dance T 7:30-8:30
 - Intermediate/Advanced belly dance Sa 1:30-2:30
 - Vernetta's Dance Studio, 3927 Utah, North Park (2)

East County

- Cyrena** (619)698-9421
- Beginning belly dance 8 wks. M 5:45-7:00
 - Intermediate belly dance 8 wks. M 7:00-8:30
- San Carlos Recreation Center, 6445 Lake Badin Ave. (2)
- Jasmina** (619)660-4350
- Beginning through intermediate belly dance Th 4:30-6:00
- Cuyamaca College, Room R205, Rancho San Diego Parkway (1)
- Ninah Sahar** (619) 561-5675
- 12/3 Putting cymbals/dance together, beg. choreography 8 wks. Th 5:30
 - 12/2 Putting the Kashlimar moves together 8 wks. W 6:30
 - 12/3 "I have a problem!" Arms 8 wks. Th 6:30
 - 12/2 Hottest new Lebanese moves! 8 wks. W 7:30
 - Private coaching by appointment (2)
- Nefera** (619)579-9526
- Belly dance basics T 7:00-8:00
- Rebecca's Sewer's Resale, 1321 E. Main Street, El Cajon (1)

South County

- Ana Goebel** (619)660-6965
- Beginning/Intermediate belly dance Th 7:30-8:50
- Spring Valley Recreation Center, 8765 Jamacha Blvd., Spring Valley (1)

Samedia Costumer List

- Aleia (760) 930-9893
- Morwenna Assaf (760) 433-2276
- Athena's Boutique 221-2920
- Cristóbal 697-9121
- Gypsy Wear (Rebecca Long) 447-1835
- Nora Luchs 457-7741
- Scherzade's Souk 581-0135
- Theresa Freese 298-0849
- G.A. Walke 445-6674

World Dance Celebration

by *Mariah*

On Friday night, October 23, at the Howard Brubeck Theatre, the Palomar College Performing Arts Department presented World Dance Celebration. The audience was taken on a cultural ride that spanned the globe. We went to the heart of Mexico, Japan, India, West Africa, Brazil, Northern Mexico and Ireland.

The highlight of the evening for me was going to the Middle East with Morwenna and Walid Assaf's C*E*D*A*R - Cultural/Ethnic Dance Arts Repertory and the dance troupe Raks El Anwar, meaning Dance of the Light. Their performance was called The Moulded, meaning a festival or holiday Middle Eastern Style, and that it was.

The intro was very clever. The curtain opened to Morwenna artistically poised on a chaise lounge in a setting that could be a meeting place. There were additional props of a round table and chairs which was a very nice touch. A few moments later, 2 women with a little girl entered the stage bringing food and gifts. They greeted each other with happiness and warmth.

From the audience, live music started and the rest of the troupe with the musicians came on stage. Morwenna did, I would say, a welcome dance accompanied by Walid and Michael and encouraged by the other dancers. Morwenna was glowing as she moved gracefully across the floor. The audience was enthused and receptive.

With all the dancers joining in, they flowed right into Raks el Quaria, performing a traditional Lebanese village dance. Their costumes were stunning in an array of colorful sparkle and textures. All were in Beledi dresses with hip scarves of magenta, purple, turquoise, red, blue, black, silver, and gold. Everyone had beautiful smiles and were spreading the joy of dance out from their hearts.

Magically a cane dance was performed very effectively to Eskandrani, a modern piece based on the work of the late Ibrahim Farrah using a song about the area of Alexandria, Egypt. Then Ya Ein La Mouletagne-Eye of the Mountain was played for a traditional Arabic dance. The choreography was very impressive and the dancers executed the moves in a natural and fun-loving way. It was obvious that they were well rehearsed.

At the end, Walid Assaf, whom was a sparkplug for enthusiastic energy, and Michael Le Bien played expertly while each dancer was acknowledged as they exited the stage; Vilia Bouilly, Vicki Deriso, Trisha Drennan, Susan Marchu-Farley, Ravenn Fleming, Annel Fritz, Dede Reimer, Renah Stevenson, Jade and Sarah. Morwenna Assaf was deservedly handed a bouquet of red roses at the close of their outstanding performance.

What impressed me the most about the performance in comparison to all the other World Dances is how our dance brings out the individual. Even though in this venue the dances were choreographed, each dancer had her own special way and flavor that added to the beautiful painting of movement. It was truly a multi-faceted work of art with color, rhythm, movement, emotion, heart, and soul. Congratulations to all of you for a job well done.

Mariah



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Thank You!



A big thank you to Lily Splane for giving her workshop called Zills on Fire. She is the best zill player I've ever heard and I highly recommend attending this workshop. I hear there might be another one coming in the near future. Another big thank you to Aleia in Carlsbad for sponsoring Lily.

Mariah

Thank you to Marula, Alia, Cristobal, Susan Teal, David Tteal, Shannon Nowell, Brian Nowell, Randwolf, Sasha, Meleah, Francena, Morwenna, Renah, and everyone else who made Enchanted Nights a success!

Thanks for the appreciation award!!!

Theresa Freeze



Connected?

You may contact our Board Members and others at the following addresses:

SAMEDA Website:

- <http://members.aol.com/SDSAMEDA/index.htm>
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- Morwenna Assaf MAssaf7448@aol.com
- Aziza Sa'id Aziza@ZillTech.com
- Lynn Perry lynnard8@hotmail.com

Review of Enchanted Nights

The new venue is wonderful. All seating has a good view of the stage. Tony & Atlantis' acappella opening song demonstrates their professional approach. Tonya is a graceful asset to the dance and a wonderful moderator. In response to her comments on competition, she has a point but there does need to be other methods to assess your value than in comparison with others. Enchanted Nights shines as a platform to demonstrate individual talent. The roster of talent was varied and some were spectacular. The costumes were dazzling and inspiring. Especially Alia's sparkling black & gold "tour de force". I especially enjoyed "Charmed". Those snakey little vixens! Too cute. Sohaila's costume was elegant & her dancing lovely. "Taking the veil" was so clever and funny. Fast-moving and laugh-provoking, but making a point. After finally being revealed, the dancing and naughty enjoyment of their freedom was a feeling familiar to many of us. I was impressed with the efforts of C*E*D*A*R. Very polished for such a new group. They demonstrate a real commitment. The jazzy dance by Ame Van Benschoten was exquisite and elegant as recognized by Tonya. My first chance to see Morwenna dance was a revelation. She utilizes her props so well; fan, shawl, and she is so musical. Her performance blended perfectly with the music. Her moves are an adornment to the choreography. Wonderful that she has been trained in the Ibrahim Farrah method so that his influence may continue. Walid's accompaniment made me want to get up and dance (probably along with the rest of the audience). Lucky are we that they have relocated to our area. May they stay long and prosper. Fahtiem - one of my favorites. She has it all: beauty, skill, theatrics, and she is one of the few dancers utilizing difficult belly movements in her performance. She deserves the reputation as one of the "stars" of this dance. She represents the dance in an elevated manner engendering respect from the audience.

Thanks again to everyone involved. This is a major event and I appreciate that it is available to San Diego dancers. Of course, I'm ordering the video!

K. Ramirez

SAMEDRA

San Diego Area Middle Eastern Dance Association
 P.O. Box 40378
 San Diego, CA 92164-0378

Samedra is an organization of people interested in Middle Eastern dance and culture who wish to gather and exchange information. The annual membership fee is \$20.00. Please mail your completed form and a check or money order to the address above, along with any information or comments. Thank you for your support!

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