



OPA NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2016



IN THIS ISSUE: SHIMMY MOB 2016!



....AND MORE!

OPA is a non-profit society formed by bellydance enthusiasts.

The purpose of the society under the Constitution of the Society Act is as follows:

- To help educate the general public about various music and dance forms by providing shows, concerts and festivals
- To provide scholarship to music and dance students
- To sponsor international teachers and performers of the Oriental form to come to Victoria for workshops and shows.

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OPA Newsletter

Editor: Laura Filipovic

We welcome all newsletter contributions,
articles, photos, and ideas.
Since space is limited, we reserve the right to edit.

Please e-mail submissions to
newsletter@OPAsociety.com

Articles appearing in this newsletter do not
necessarily represent the views of the Editor or
the Board of Directors of OPA

Next newsletter deadline:
September 30, 2016

OPA Newsletter is a great, inexpensive place to advertise
your next show, workshop or event!*

Non-Member Advertising Rates:

Business Card \$5	Full Page \$25
Quarter page \$9	Flyer Inclusion \$25
Half Page \$15	
Classified Ad \$3	

*All members get free advertising as part of their
membership

OPA INFORMATION

OPA Board

President Candace Aldridge Sanchez

Vice-President Sherri Crowfoot

Recording Secretary Chris Thompson

Treasurer Rayna Aldridge

Directors at Large Susan Moore & Laura Filipovic

Editor Laura Filipovic

Membership Laura Filipovic

Librarian Karensa Camplair

Web Mistress Shauna Hickey

Got a question?

Want to volunteer?

Have a request for OPA's next event?

We would love to hear from you!

Email us at info@OPAsociety.com

or call Laura at 250-885-2040

OPA ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call For

Our annual call for Instructors, Performers and Vendors is now out and we are excited to see what our community has to offer this year! Based on member feedback, we are asking that Performers send performance information with their request in order for us to be able to best curate the show and include a wide range of styles. Check out the ad on page 5 and we hope to hear from you soon!

New Membership Policy

We are excited to announce that we have made a slight change to our Membership renewal services. Typically we have one renewal date of May 1; however we noticed that about half of our membership renews around this date and the other half renews closer to our annual Bellydance Showcase. As a result, we will now have two membership renewal dates: May 1 and October 1. Those members who sign up between March 1 through August 31 will have a renewal date of May 1; those who sign up between September 1 and February 28 will have a renewal date of October 1. Don't worry, we have your sign-up dates on file and will be contacting you to let you know when your membership is due! This change in policy ensures everyone gets as close to one full calendar year of membership for their fee and we want to make sure members feel they are getting the most bang for their buck. We look forward to your renewal soon!

NOTE FROM THE BOARD



*L to R: Karenza (Librarian), Chris, Sherri, Rayna, Laura, Candace;
(missing: Susan)*

President. We are excited to charge ahead into another OPA year with this team and keep serving this vibrant Island community!

We also would like to thank everyone who came out to our Spring Hafla. We had a great time seeing what dancers had to offer and getting a chance to re-connect. We were happy to give out some fabulous prizes, including: an OPA membership, an OPA tank, a copy of the Bellydance Reader and two \$50 dance scholarship.

Next up, we are looking forward to The Fifth Annual Vancouver Island Bellydance Showcase. Our official Call for Instructors, Performers and Vendors is now out and we can't wait to hear from you! Send us an email with your interest or any questions you may have. Happy summer!!!

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our Summer 2016 issue!

There are some great submissions this month and a host of photos. I would like to acknowledge all of our fantastic contributions: a wonderful interview with frequent island guest Farima Berenji, recaps of the Victoria and Cowichan Valley Shimmy Mob teams, a new OPA Library review, pictures from the Harmony BellyDance student showcase and the Mid-Island Bazaar, a piece on digital learning and an account of training with Suhaila Salimpour.

You will also notice that we have the Call for Instructors, Performers and Vendors on page 5. Our next issue (October 2016) will have all of the details for The 5th Annual Vancouver Island Bellydance Showcase, but keep an eye on our Facebook page for the details sooner. In the meantime, have a wonderful and safe summer!

Hello everyone!

We hope you are all having a fantastic, dance-filled summer so far. We here at the OPA Board have gone through a few changes, with our brand new Board of Directors being voted in at the AGM. We are so excited to welcome a new face to the Board this year: Chris Thompson! We couldn't be more delighted to have her join us as Secretary. We have also had some restructuring as we welcome Candace to the role of President and Sherri to Vice

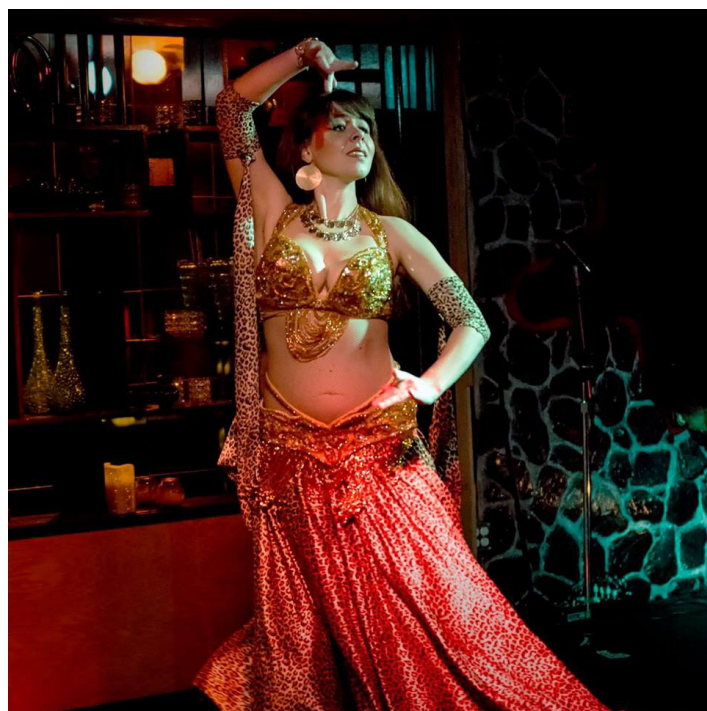


Photo by Brendan Lally

THE FIFTH ANNUAL

Vancouver Island Bellydance Showcase

INSTRUCTORS

We are looking for instructors to teach a 45 minute 'sampler' workshop on a specialty topic of their choice. Please submit your interest and possible topic(s) by August 15 to: instructors@OPAsociety.com

PERFORMERS

We are looking for soloists, duets & troupes interested in performing at our evening showcase. Contact us at: performers@OPAsociety.com

VENDORS

We are looking for vendors interested in table rentals for our Vendor Room (free entry for customers!).

Limited tables available. Email us at:

vendors@OPAsociety.com

26 | 11 | 2016

VICTORIA, BC

INTERVIEW WITH FARIMA

BY CHRIS THOMPSON

I recently had the chance to chat with Farima Berenji (via Facebook). Farima is a frequent visitor to Cathy Stoyko's Abbey Studio in Cumberland.

Can you give us a short description of your dance collective?

In 2008, I established the Farima Dance Company in the San Francisco Bay Area, a dance ensemble that seeks to interpret, present, and perform traditional classical, folkloric, and sacred dances of the Silk Road. Based on my training and experience I began a worldwide collaboration with other traditional dancers and musicians to create a Worldwide Simorgh Dance Collective, a world community of expert and emerging artists devoted to cross-cultural dialogue and artistic collaboration through traditional, classical, and sacred dance styles of Iran and the Silk Road. The Simorgh Dance Collective currently has member companies and artist affiliations in

Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Seward, Alaska, in Comox Valley, Victoria, and Vancouver, BC, in various cities in Turkey, various cities in Iran, England, the Republic of Mauritius, and the San Francisco Bay Area. The Simorgh Dance Collective is honored to be the first Persian dance company directed by an Iranian woman to perform during a U.S. presidential reception. This 2015 performance took place in Seward, Alaska for President Barak Obama.

“And the birds asked the Wizard: “We desire to know the great Simorgh, the one bird who is believed to be the most beautiful bird on this Universe.” And the Wizard answered: “Across the sea, out on the horizon, there you will find this legend. But only those united are able to see such a bird.”

And so under the guidance of a leader bird, the birds start their journey toward the mysterious land, crossing the Seven Valleys in order to find the Simorgh. Yet, one by one, they drop out of ego, out of pride, each offering an excuse and unable to endure the journey. At the end, the group of thirty birds finally flew over the sea, and there, out on the horizon, they found what they have been searching for...their own reflection on the sea the united birds found the dwelling of the Simorgh.”

What is your hope for the troupe here on Vancouver Island?

My hope is to create and grow a united Dance Collective in BC and to create a supportive and creative community to present the rich, ancient culture and heritage of my homeland Iran and the Silk Road. I hope that the troupe can grow into other parts of BC so that they can share and teach my love of dance and his



tory to other members of the community. I believe in dance as a dialogue among nations and seeks to bridge across the globe dancers who love and share a like passion to present Persian Dance as well as those who hope to have a dialogue through dance. I hope that the troupe seek to continue my choreographic works, research projects, global exchanges, and my artistic visions and also to bring their own vision and ideas into work.

Are you looking for more dancers on the Island or considering teaching on other parts of the Island?

Yes, of course as I said above I hope that more dancers and educators follow my vision and for them to grow and teach in the community.

When will you be back in BC?

I will be back in BC in Aug. to teach an intensive retreat on the Ancient Persian Goddesses and Temple Dances. I will also be performing for Atmosphere Festival with my company members and we will also be performing after the retreat. I will also be teaching and hosting a Sufi whirling workshop and event

Can you share a bit about your archaeology work?

After receiving my MA in archeology and Dance Ethnology, I began to work with UNESCO as a field supervisor and VP of International Art Education. I began excavation and filed research mainly on ancient artifacts and mythology of ancient Iran and Silk Road, following that I worked with UN in doing field research in advocating and documenting dances, culture and healing rituals of Iran and Central Asia. For over 10 years I began a long journey of research and preservation of Iranian culture and dance. In the processes we discovered many lost civilizations, artifacts, lost dances, history, was awarded the the UN as the first Iranian Woman Dance Ethnologist, Awarded by Iranian National Woman Council, Awarded by CA congressman, Awarded by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Awarded by National Folk Dance Association as the first Iranian Woman in preservation of Iranian Folk Dance, Performed for the President of US and was selected for PhD candidate.

Can I still have the pirate hat when we go to Disneyland?

I'm waiting for you to say the OK and we are good to go! :)

And on a personal note....how are you? I just love following your travels

I'm well, and feel blessed to have you as a friend :)

.

Visit Farima's Facebook page 'Farima Dance'

2016 VICTORIA SHIMMY MOB

BY BUNNY KEO



May 14, 2016 marked the 6th annual Shimmy Mob. This is an international event, taking place every second Saturday in May. The purpose is to celebrate World Belly Dance Day, and to raise funds and awareness for local women's shelters in participating communities. Dancers take to the streets or other public venues or stages to perform a choreographed routine, flash mob style!

Check out how this event has grown worldwide:

2011 - 35 cities/500 participants (approx)

2012 - 108 cities/1603 participants

2013 - 156 cities/2109 participants

2014 - 162 cities/2137 participants

2015 - 181 cities/2370 participants

2016 - 202 cities/2450 participants

Victoria has been a participating city since the event started in 2011 and has been building momentum every year. Victoria was the third largest team in Canada this year with 22 registered dancers. Once again, staff members from The Cridge Centre also participated as dancers. The Cridge Transition House was the chosen women's shelter for Victoria, a refuge for over 400 women and children every year.

This year, Victoria raised over \$3000 for The Cridge Transition House. Various fundraisers included: bake sales, online auction, Bollywood donation class, belly dance donation days, Bellyfit by donation class, etc. Big thanks to many local sponsors for contributing items for auction, rehearsal space or other service: Cleopatra's Bedroom, Bashirah MED Studio, Amethyst Studio, Full Circle Studio, OPA Society, Sacred Centre Dance, Hillside Centre, Victoria Public Market.

Victoria had 5 dance locations this year: Hillside Centre, Victoria Public Market, Full Circle Studio, Westshore Town Centre, and the front lawn of the Legislature! What fun was had by all!

Mark your calendars! May 13, 2017: Will you be signing up for the next Shimmy Mob

COWICHAN VALLEY SHIMMY MOB

BY CHRIS THOMPSON

The 2016 Cowichan Valley Shimmy Mob team has been busy shaking up the locals with their sassy moves and rice krispie squares.

On May 14th, World Bellydance Day; the team performed this year's choreography at 6 different locations in 3 towns! At a small town country fair, on the dock of the bay, a community store, a downtown park, an organic cafe and an outdoor farmer's market. We wrapped up the day with nibblies and a libation or two at the local wine bar.

This year's team was led by Lara Brunschot of Spinning Ninny fame and consisted of Dallis, Lynene, Shauna, Mervi and Chris from Duncan, Sarah from Saltspring Island, Linda from Lake Cowichan and Dee from Cobble Hill..... truly a Valley team!!



We hosted both an online and a live silent auction and were delighted with the variety of goodies that were donated by local businesses, dancers and other great people.

This year we held our world renowned (well, maybe that's just in our heads) Shimmy and Silk - An Adventure in Bellydance Performance and Fashion at the Duncan Showroom Downstairs. Our efforts were helped and complimented by Longevity John, the always ravishing and sometime Shimmy Mobster Georgia, Sound man Ted Cadillac, Jack the drummer and delectable dance sisters Beth, Robin, Daisy and Karensa.

Rice Krispie Squares have always been a money maker for us and by the end of the night we had collected \$60 in donations for Rice Krispie Squares alone.

At this time there are still a few more shekels to add to our total but at this point we have raised just under \$3000! All of this lovely loot will go to the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society and Somenos Transition House.

Thank You to everyone who supported us in any way!



HARMONY BELLYDANCE SPRING STUDENT SHOWCASE

Photos by Alan Barr





MID-ISLAND BAZAAR

BY CHRIS THOMPSON

The Annual Mid Island Belly Dance Bazaar was held on Saturday, June 25 at Wellington Hall in Nanaimo. This event is a fundraiser for Haven House, a transitional shelter for women and children in the Nanaimo area.

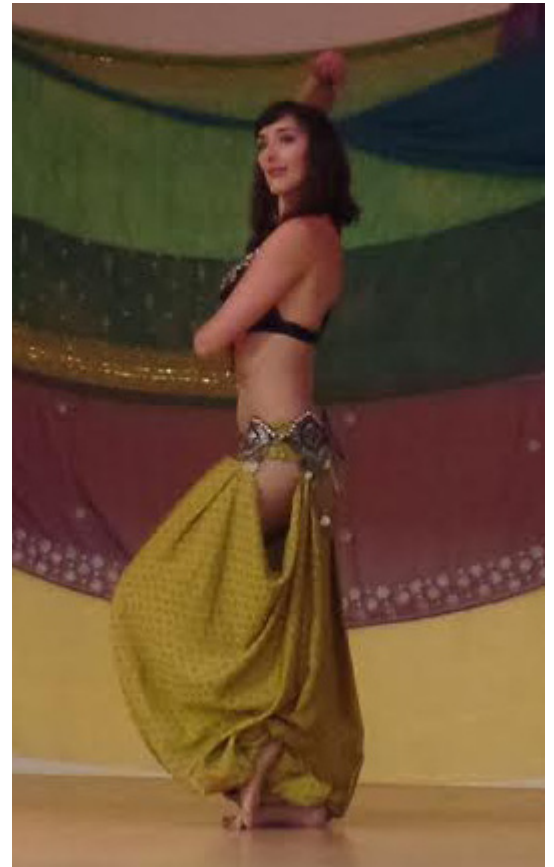
Dancers from up and down the Island, from Cortez and Saltspring Island, graced the stage and took part in the fun. The lovely and funny Azrakesh once again joined us from Vancouver and acted as this years MC.

There was lots of blingtastic, shiny, ruffly, colourful swag for sale and everyone took advantage of some excellent deals. A chair massage certainly made my day!

A few mini workshops were presented to bazaar goers and many dancers graced the stage. Solos, duos, groups and troupes; many varieties of belly dance were showcased. Each performance brought something special and unique to the mix. There were even bag pipes!

In keeping with the spirit and the reason for the Mid Island Bazaar, the local One Billion Rising group performed. This group is part of a worldwide initiative that uses dance to raise awareness of violence against women. Members from 3 Shimmy Mob teams on the Island also came together to perform this years choreography; this is also a world wide belly dance movement that uses bellydance to raise awareness and to raise funds for local women's shelters. These women come together with passion for a common cause.

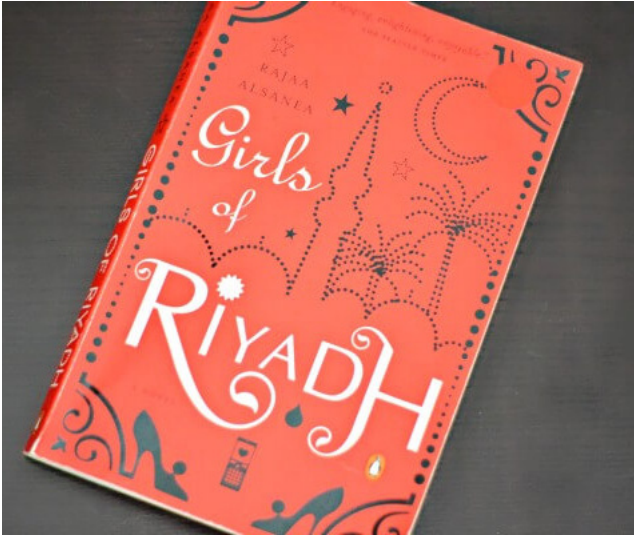
Many, many thanks to Genya Bon, Leah Bland, Azrakesh and all the volunteers who worked to put this together. Looking forward to next year!





LIBRARY LOVELIES

BY KAREN SA CAMPLAIR



Now, I admit that I chose this book to read, indeed, by judging it by its cover! Its bright red, 'middle east' / 'Sex and the City' inspired cover shouted, "READ ME!" So I did, and although not really a book about belly dance, it definitely lived up to its vibrant cover.

Girls of Riyadh by Rajaa Alsanea

"O God, we - the Girls of Riyadh - have been forbidden many things. Do not take the blessing of love away from us, too!" - Rajaa Alsanea

About the Author: Rajaa Alsanea grew up in Riyadh, one of six siblings in a family of doctors and dentists. She lives in Chicago but intends to return to Saudi Arabia after attaining a degree in endodontics. She is twenty-six years old, and this is her first novel.

Originally released in Arabic in 2005, *Girls of Riyadh* was immediately banned in Saudi Arabia due to controversial and inflammatory content. After black market circulation Alsanea's bestseller across the middle east was published in English in 2007 for our western pleasure.

Written in the form of a collection of e-mails, Rajaa Alsanea recounts the personal lives of four young Saudi girls, Lamees, Michelle, Gamrah, and Sadeem. A story, she hints, that is 'riddled with hypocrisy and drugged with contractions.' In the first chapter, Alsanea writes, "it's to you that I write my e-mails. May they be the matches that set your thoughts on fire, the lighter that fuels the blaze of change."

In this novel, Alsanea gives a small, yet intriguing glimpse into a world we might never otherwise know and allows us the ability to relate to it in our own lives and culture. Her novel is teeming with illicit drinking, women posing as men in order to drive cars, premarital sex, covert dating, marriage, divorce and turbulent emotions; complete with helpful little cliff notes!

It was compelling realizing the similarities (and differences) in Saudi and Western interactions. A "typical" western imagines Saudi Arabia made up of 'women dressed in black from head to toe'. Alsanea sets out to redress this injustice by proving that 'women here fall deeply in and out of love just like women everywhere else.'

Alsanea also recounts the complicated relationships among women, in where love and affection lies, so might envy and jealousy. "Women don't pretty themselves up for men: they do it to get back at other women." — Sacha Guitry

And she touches on the obligations and restrictions also imposed onto the men of Saudi. "...brides and grooms were concealing their own sad and yearning hearts because they had been kept from choosing their life's partner.", "...that poor bride whom circumstances would unite tonight, and all the rest of her nights, with a man forced to marry her..."

Rajaa even includes in the novel introductions, if you will, that prefaced each e-mail. Where she expresses her responses to an overwhelming array of feedback (both good & bad). Responses such as, "Is divorce a major crime committed by the woman only? Why doesn't our society harass the divorced man the way it crushes the divorced woman? I know that you readers are always ready to dismiss and make light of these naïve questions of mine, but surely you can see that they are logical questions and they deserve some careful thought."

Another fascinating section of this book outlines character categories, applying to both men and women, based on a number of factors, including strength of personality, self-confidence, good looks and so forth. Not an absolute science, of course, just one women's analogy and opinion, however it does provoke speculation about our common human nature.

Hopefully I haven't given away the whole bag and generated just enough interest!

Contact the OPA library (library@opasociety.com) if you wish to read the Girls of Riyadh or borrow any of our other hot items. You'll find a complete list of library treasures here. (<http://www.opasociety.com/library.html>)

Karensa Camplair
OPA Librarian



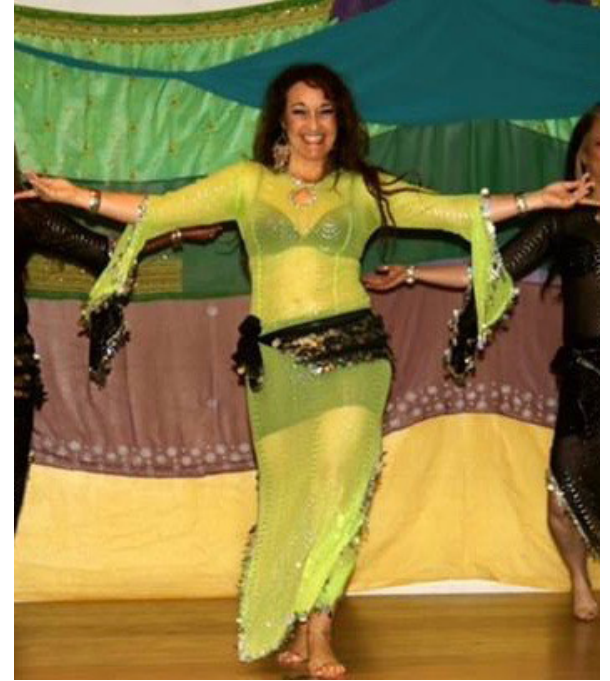
CONTINUING EDUCATION: ADVENTURES IN DIGITAL LEARNING

BY BOBBIE BARRY

I am sure most of you will agree, there is no substitute for being in a classroom, eager to learn from a teacher that you respect and trust. But what do you do when a teacher isn't available in the style, specialization or skill level that you need, in order to keep growing towards your dance goals? Ideally you spend the time and the money to travel to attend workshops, intensives or courses. But what if that option isn't available either?

Luckily we live in a time where there are many avenues of additional learning open to us when we can't get the live instruction we need. I thought I'd share some of the pros and cons of my own personal experience with digital learning.

DVDS - I have an extensive collection of instructional and performance DVDs by many of my favourite performers/teachers.



Pros –

1. You pay a one-time fee and you have that instruction available to you at your convenience.
2. You can pace yourself and or repeat as often as you like to absorb the content and build stamina, strength and speed.

Cons –

1. You must be disciplined to make yourself work with the material regularly and I confess that I have not made the most of some of the wonderful instruction that I have at my fingertips.
2. Sometimes the instruction is not clear or is rushed in the videos.
3. No feedback from the teacher

PRE-RECORDED ONLINE LESSONS – these are very much like using DVDs. Sometimes you purchase the lesson for a short period of time or you can pay a little more and save it as a digital download on your computer, laptop or iPad. Lessons can be short and specialized or longer, covering several aspects of one topic.

Pros & Cons – Same as for DVDs

LIVE ONLINE LESSONS – PRIVATE OR GROUP

Pros –

1. You can book packages or pay as you go.
2. Most instructors give you the option to cancel or change your lesson date up to 24 hours in advance with no penalty.
3. There is a sense of being in a live classroom as you interact with other students and the teacher during the class. You can ask questions and make comments – either via microphones or by live chat.
4. You receive feedback – both general and specific – from the instructor as she “scrolls” around the class to watch students run through the drills or combinations
5. You can take the lesson no matter where you are. I was able to attend my regular Saturday class even when I was on vacation!
6. Private classes with the instructor of your choice allows you to have specific feedback and things to work on even when you can't travel to learn from that teacher.

Cons –

1. Sometimes the audio or visual quality can suffer when streaming live.
2. Continuity of weekly lessons can vary according to the instructor's schedule. For example, I study online with Sadie Marquardt and I take weekly group classes from mid-September to May. However, there are gaps due to her travel schedule and we always break in the summer when she is busy with her summer touring schedule.

ONLINE INTENSIVES & COACHING – I only have experience with a group online intensive but I know that some dancers prepping for competition will seek coaching from a trusted instructor as part of their preparation. My only experience with online intensives has been with Amanda Rose so I will speak specifically to the program as she offers it.

Pros –

1. These are of a short duration (4, 6 or 8 weeks) covering specific topics, stylizations or techniques so there is no need to make a long term financial or time commitment to lessons you might not be able to attend or use.
2. Each weeks' lessons are usually only available for a week which I find makes me motivated to make the most of the money I've spent by working as much and as hard as I can with the material before it's gone.
3. Each lesson has basic and advanced drill components and a combination breakdown before the combination is run with the music.
4. Once signed up you become part of a private Facebook group for that particular intensive so that you can interact with the teacher and other students, sharing experiences, motivating each other and asking questions.
5. Sometimes there is a bonus week in which you are asked to videotape yourself doing one of the week's combinations and post it to the group Facebook page. The group is invited to comment and the teacher then will give you private feedback via Facebook Message.

Cons – To be honest, other than not being a live class, I can't think of any negatives with this type of experience as I found that I am motivated to work consistently. By also videotaping myself each week I am able to recognize that I am actually improving.

FEEDBACK/CRITIQUE GROUP – recently I decided to join a Facebook group specifically for posting videos for critique and feedback. I chose a group where I don't know the other dancers so that feedback given and received is not biased.

Pros –

1. Having unbiased eyes looking at your work and giving feedback can help you be more objective about your work and much more open to understanding what you need to do to reach the goals you've set for yourself.
2. When there are clear rules of conduct and guidelines re giving feedback, this can be a valuable tool for seeing yourself as others see you when you dance.

Cons –

1. There are a lot of people who have joined the particular group I am in who watch the videos but never comment on what they see. Nor do they share their own work. I don't particularly like the fact that others can sit back and be voyeurs without taking any risks themselves.
2. Sometimes it is obvious that the people critiquing really don't have much idea about the style of dance they may be commenting on – even when the submission has been labeled and background information on the performance or work in progress has been given.

VIDEOTAPING YOURSELF – I remember reading a long time ago that in the early days of her dance journey Rachel Brice used to videotape herself constantly so that she could gauge her own progress. I have found that videotaping choreography demos for my classes and videotaping my personal works-in-progress has helped me tremendously in improving technical skills where I already knew I was lacking. Not to mention, a fair amount that I did not realize I was lacking until watching myself on playback! Most of us have a love/hate relationship with videos of ourselves but along with seeing things that need improving – whether that be technical skills, use of space, angles, posture, etc. it can be very rewarding to see snippets of things and realize you have finally gained some level of control over something you've been struggling with!

Places to purchase DVDs, pre-recorded and streaming lessons: direct from the instructor's web sites, workshops, Cheeky Girls Productions, IAMED, RAQSTV, Datura Online, bellyblasfitness

Hubs for live private & group classes: Skype, powhow, bellyblastfitness

Examples of teachers offering online Classes, Privates, Intensive & Coaching Offerings: Amanda Rose, An-suya, Hannan Sultan, Ranya Renée, Ruby Beh, Sadie Marquardt, Suhaila Salimpour

There are quite a few other digital scenarios that I haven't had experience with but I hope you have as much fun discovering ways to keep learning and growing as I have!

Bobbie @ Bashirah Middle Eastern Dance Company

June 27, 2016

www.raksbobbie.com

SUHAILA & JAMILA TRAINING

BY CANDACE ALDRIDGE SANCHEZ



Where to begin with my journey of the Salimpours' and their format training? I started studying with Suhaila back in 2002, not knowing her from a hole in the ground...I was a baby dancer, knew nothing about anything or anyone...My teacher at the time said to me, "My partner and I are heading down to Portland for this incredible event down there, you should come... it will be super fun!" So, I went home, asked my own partner if he wanted to join me...and that was that...we packed up the dogs not too long later and headed down to an event we knew nothing about. To say that event changed my dance life would be a complete understatement, however, that is an entirely different story.

Jump 14 years later to the present and here I am. Still studying and immersing myself in training with Suhaila. I did not start my Jamila training however, until

about 4.5 years ago...officially that is. Turns out, I've been dancing her 'format' my entire dance life. That is the beauty of Jamila, whether you know it or not, a large part of her lives in each and every one of us, of course, this is just my opinion and thoughts on the matter.

My first attempt at the Jamila level 1 format was down in Albany, CA 4.5 years ago while I was pregnant with my babe Blaise. It was amazing, overwhelming, technical training, finger cymbals and was down right difficult...I was 3 months pregnant..yikes...and we only took less than a day to drive there, only to dive straight into the 3 days straight, first thing. This was also an incredibly emotional experience for myself and the ladies that joined me on that trip. It was a pinnacle moment in my dance training for many reasons and would take at least a few years for me to digest what had happened, how I felt about it and what I would do with the information I learned during that experience....but again, that is also another story. The trip was named, 'Empire of Lies'. Its a good story if you ever want to hear about it....

I digress again, back on track. In the beginning of this year, Suhaila was back in Vancouver BC, being hosted by Sally Myrfield. She was here for a 3 day intensive, offering the Jamila Level 1 format with option to certify. I was there and I was going for it! I also managed to convince....yes, convince, 3 of my students to come with me...I was over the moon! Finally, my girls were going to experience what I talk about ALL the time!!!! I was also kind of nervous about this, truth be told!

We arrived in Vancouver first thing Friday morning pre workshop sign in. It was going to be a long day, long weekend....but off we went. Over the course of the 3 days, we would continue to learn the entire Level 1 Format. It is Extensive, WOW! It is technical, beautiful, layered, has an incredible ancient feel but at the same time feels like maybe you've been doing it your whole life.

We would start every morning and after lunch heading into a fairly classic 'Suhaila, warm up', Yikes again! Strengthening, conditioning, warming up the body and the brain, these would last easily 45mins to 1 hr. Then we would head into the format training. Always layered with finger cymbals, although Suhaila always says that she does not consider cymbals a layer but an extension of a dancers being...

We were playing: alternating 1/4, 1/2, full and double time, 3's, 31313, 337, 373, 7's, 5's, 355, 553, 3153, 3513, 4's - All Right and Left hand dominant...Allllll Daaayyyy Loonnnggg. Yes, I said Left hand dominant...you should give it a try....its completely fascinating!!! lol

In the Jamila format, things are done slightly different, at least from any other class I have been in. You work in two circles, running counter clockwise. The two circles are entities of their own and do not function together at anytime. There are up to 3 'teachers' or higher-level dancers in the middle of the two circles. For us, these amazing souls and dancers included Jordan, Sally and Suhaila.

Jordan was Suhailas assistant for the entire weekend and is Level 3 Jamila certified and Level 3 Suhaila certified. Both Sally and Jordan are in the Bal Anat performing group, which is said to be the longest running performing troupe to date in our multi genre of bellydance.

Our days would last about 8.5 - 9 hrs long and yes, we were tired. Suhaila knows how to run an intensive though let me tell you. She knows how to work a room like no one else and knows how to keep you focused and on point for each moment of learning. She is strong, fierce and knows how to push you to your absolute fullest potential. She believes in you with everything she has and has no time for letting you give up on yourself. She is compassionate, sincere and deeply understanding. She takes the time to remember you, your life, the extensions of your life, where you are in your training, where you were at the last time you saw her and the place you are in at the present, how its changed, where you need work and where you are totally excelling. She also knows how to be a total bad ass, kick your butt and push you like, in my opinion, no one else does or possibly can. The potential that she sees in dancers far exceeds simplicity, complacency or mediocrity; she sees that we can all be absolutely stunning, fiercely technical, deeply emotional and highly talented beings and will accept nothing less - THIS is what I love about her the most. Her evil laugh when she knows she just gave you something so ridiculous, yet in that evil laugh a knowing that although we won't get it today, she will see us do it, in our own time, when we are ready to accept our own greatness, put in the work and step into our greatest selves within the dance world and within our dance self!!!

I ended my weekend taking the testing portion of the day that lasted a straight 2 hours. Yep, 2 hours and its no joke. You EARN your certificate, it is not a gift you just pay for, show up for and receive....you put in the work, you get tested, you prove that you know what your doing, and you either pass or fail...and yes, some people do not pass. It sucks but you know what, it also make you understand that it isn't a joke, that you need to take your dance and training seriously. Really, if we don't, then who will take us seriously?!

We started with a written exam full of multiple choice, one word answers, sentence answers, fill in the blanks, etc...and it was on Everything from history, to timing, to technical movement, format, etc.

And then it was the technical portion...HOLY SHIZAM!!!! We were all placed in one circle exactly as she wanted us to be...the only place to look was eyes forward, keep to yourself and do your own thing, for 50 minutes straight! No break of one singular kind...around and around we went, from one move in the format to the next, changing cymbal patterns from right to left dominant - for every single one...around and around we went...sweat and more sweat...climbing the wall...letting everything go, letting the barriers down, making room for everything you knew was to come...every muscle and fibre tiring...it was the 24th hour or so of dance in those 3 days after all...mental exhaustion setting in....and then she called us done. She put her pen and paper down, congratulated us all for making it through testing, thanked us all and let us know our results would be coming soon in the next few days. It was over.

However many days later, I found out I passed, I was over the moon. But you know, here's the thing...it almost didn't matter, because when you do things like that, it has to be about the journey. It takes sooooo much to get there, to those singular moments that are so fleeting. If we don't enjoy the journey, getting to the 'Yes, you passed' or the performance, said moment of a lifetime, then seemingly, it might never be enough, or not really worth it. I choose to enjoy every fibrous moment of sweat and discomfort - in my body, mind and spirit - Yes, there were tears...there are always tears and usually when I least expect or wish them to take place....but I just breathe, work my way through it, attempt to not give up or give in, not walk away or have a fit, lol...but just breathe, feel it and grow from it and move on from it.

I am deeply grateful to have Suhaila as one of my great teachers, she always will be, I know this for sure! My learning with her is endless and I look forward to the endlessness that exists within our relationship as dancer and teacher!



EVENT LISTINGS

AUGUST

Aug 25-28th AWAKENING: Invocation of the Seven
Persian Goddesses Retreat with Farima
Berenji on Denman Island
<http://cathystoykodance.blogspot.ca>

SEPTEMBER

Sept 23-25th Harmony BellyDance Co Presents:
Mira Betz Workshops and Show
in Victoria
www.harmonybellydance.com

OCTOBER

Oct 15th *SAVE THE DATE*
MEDA's Twilight at the Oasis
Details coming soon!
www.medabellydance.com

NOVEMBER

Nov 26th *SAVE THE DATE*
OPA Presents: The Fifth Annual
Vancouver Island Bellydance Showcase
in Victoria
Details coming soon!
www.OPAsociety.com



Mira Betz

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mira Betz 2016 Workshops



Mira Betz has been teaching and performing Traditional and Contemporary forms of Middle Eastern dance for 20 years. Her work has been instrumental in the emergence of a new style known all around the world as Tribal Fusion, a dance rooted in tradition while forging new bonds between world dance and individuality. Mira, known as a “teacher’s teacher”, empowers students to cultivate curiosity, find their own unique voice, and brings the notions of artistry and integrity to every class.

The multi-faceted career of Mira is a testament to her passionate artistry and desire to for continual growth. Mira began her training in Middle Eastern dance as a young teen studying primarily with Katarina Burda for over 10 years, where she developed a solid foundation of contemporary, traditional, as well as ritualistic dance forms. In 1996 she studied with Jamila Salimpour and Suhaila Salimpour. In 1998 Mira went abroad to live and study traditional dances in Morocco. Active in theater, dance and the performing arts for over 20 years, Mira Betz has become a sought after dancer, choreographer, costumer, and teacher training and inspiring many of today's top Tribal Fusion stars. Mira Betz received her B.F.A. from the California College of Arts and Crafts. Her dance background includes training in Salsa, Modern, Jazz, and Flamenco.

~ Workshop Descriptions ~

Friday, September 23rd (6:30-8:30)

Juicy Mira of Danceness

Dive into your weekend of dance with a “shut up and dance” style class. Working flow, direction, extension and expression. Mira pushes you to dance with your whole being

Manipulate Me (Saturday/Sunday)

Essential to any dancer of any style of movement is the power of manipulation. It is the finesse that turns words into poetry, simple moves into magnificent expression. Handed a combo, phrase, or move students will develop an extended language of personal expression by forces and concepts of manipulation. By experiencing and applying these concepts in a supported environment students gain a new understanding of what they been studying, new avenues of development and a strong sense of personal empowerment in one’s own “style” and what is possible when it comes to expression. A great class for any genre of bellydance, Mira has broken down the manipulations into four levels for greater understanding, this weekend we will dissect the first two of those four.

Saturday, September 24th (10:00-12:00, lunch 1:00-3:00) *Saturday can be taken on its own!

Level 1: Intrinsic

An in depth look at manipulations at the core of our dance. These, intuitive to some while being revolutionary to others, are the foundation of expression through dance. After all the drills, after teaching your body the deep muscle memory it takes to execute isolations and complex patterns, how do we translate these “moves” into expression. This level of manipulations are the foundation we build our work on pushing our dance beyond showmanship and into communication.

Sunday, September 25th (10:30-12:30, lunch 1:30-3:30)

Level 2: Operative

With a powerful understanding of Level One Manipulations we move into the second level, theses may be slightly more abstract in nature yet they open more realms of possibility. Moving us into tools that cull expression through longer choreographic sequencing, deeper abstraction and clearer intention.

www.harmonybellydance.com 250-858-0825 Candace Aldridge Sanchez

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mira Betz Workshops 2016



Pricing

Summer Special ~ 2 Weeks Only

**** \$295 Paid in Full ~ Whole WeekEnd Only ****

~ To the first 20 participants ~

After June 30th 2016

Friday (2 Hrs) \$65

Saturday (4 Hrs) \$130

Saturday/Sunday \$260

Full weekend \$315

After August 31st 2016 (If still available)

Friday (2 Hrs) \$75

Saturday (4 Hrs) \$150

Saturday/Sunday (4 Hrs) \$300

*Payment Plans Available (For Full Pricing Paid before deadlines)

*Sorry, No Refunds

Contact: Candace Aldridge Sanchez

250-858-0825

candace@harmonybellydance.com

www.harmonybellydance.com

Registration Form and Show Tickets

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Workshops: (Please Circle or Check if Scanning)

Juicy Mira of Danceness

Saturday Intrinsic/Sunday Operative

Saturday Intrinsic

Full Weekend

Show Tickets: _____ x \$20 Each (Advance Pricing)

Mail Registration with Cheque or Money Order To:

Candace Aldridge Sanchez

#203-734 Aldebury Street

Victoria, BC

V9A 5T4

(cheques payable to Candace Aldridge Sanchez)

Bank Email Transfers can be sent to candace@harmonybellydance.com (Please email registration form to candace@harmonybellydance.com)

www.harmonybellydance.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

*Mira
Betz*

*Shadows
in the
Dark*



Ridge Playhouse
4980 Wesley Road

Doors: 7:00 Starts: 7:30

Tickets:
\$20 in advance/\$25 at the door

Performers to be Announced!

Interested in sending
in an audition?

Email a video to
candace@harmonybellydance.com
by August 31st.

September 24th

For More Information 250-858-0825 or candace@harmonybellydance.com

www.harmonybellydance.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

OPA PRESENTS:

THE FIFTH ANNUAL

Vancouver Island Bellydance Showcase

26 | 11 | 2016

WWW.OPASOCIETY.COM

TEACHER LISTINGS

Member listing -to be included, email info@OPAsociety.com

Victoria

Bobbie

Bashirah MED Studio
137 Skinner Street
Raqs Sharqi, modern Egyptian,
American Cabaret, Gypsy: Fantasy & Fusion
(250) 818-7025
raksbobbie@shaw.ca
www.raksbobbie.com

Candace Aldridge Sanchez

Harmony Studio and Alternative Healing
734 Aldebury Street, Suite 203
Tribal Fusion, Fusion, ATS
250-858-0825
candace@harmonybellydance.com
www.harmonybellydance.com

Farideh (Cathryn Balk)

Middle Eastern and Flamenco
Group Classes and Privates
(250) 598-2043
faridahdancearts@shaw.ca
www.faridehdancearts.com

Laura Filipovic

Oriental, Folkloric, Gypsy Fusion
(250) 885-2040
lauraefilipovic@gmail.com
www.bellydancewithlaura.com

Ladysmith

Debra Shields

Improvised Tribal, Tribal Fusion, Traditional or
Classic Bellydance
debsdance@telus.net
www.facebook.com/saidisisters

Nanaimo

Lynette Harper

Arab Turkish & fusion styles,
historical/traditional & contemporary
(250) 753-1659
laahper@gmail.com
www.lynetteharper.ca

Thetis Island

Halaki

Gypsy-style Bellydance; certified Taaj BDT
(604) 997-7292
halakidance@gmail.com

Vancouver

Leona

Egyptian style
(604) 240-7387
leonabellydance@gmail.com
www.leonabellydance.com

Maki

Egyptian, Raks Sharki, Middle Eastern folkloric,
props
(604) 318-6368
maki@makidance.com
www.makidance.com

OPA LIBRARY

Books/DVDs - \$5 per two weeks CDs - \$3 per two weeks

Contact library@OPAsociety.com

DVDs

- Aiewa Presents La Danse Orientale (June 18, 2004)
- All That Glitters – Dahab Dance Ensemble (Dec. 4, 2010)
- Arabesque Dance Company presents OYOUN
- Arabesque Dance Company presents The Descent of Ishtar (Dance of the 7 Veils)
- The Art of the Drum Solo with Sonia & Issam
- Basic Beginner Belly Dance w/ Rahma Haddad
- Belly Dance for Weight Loss: Cardio Shimmy
- Belly Dance for Weight Loss: Belly Dance Boogie
- Belly Dance with Nath Keo (2 copies)
- Belly Dance with Nath Keo – Combination Steps Vol. 2
- Belly Dancing Movement Foundation w/ Yasmina Ramzy
- Belly Dance Choreography Vo. 1 w/ Yasmina Ramzy
- Egypt In Dance: Traditional Regional Dances
- Fat Chance Belly Dance: Tribal Basics (Vols. 1, 3, 4, 5)
- Harmony Bellydance & Pamela's School of Oriental Dance – A Midsummer Night Recital (June 19, 2009)
- Ibrahim Farrah presents Rare Glimpses: Dances from the Middle East Vol. 1
- I Dream Belly Dancing: Beginner
- I Dream Belly Dancing: The World of Sensual 8's
- Instructional Bellydance with Jillina Level 1
- Jillina Presents: Bellydance Evolution
- Pamela & The Amar Dancers: Magic Under the Moon (October 14, 2007)
- Pamela & The Amar Dancers: Oriental Elegance (June 25, 2010)
- Pamela Ball & Taiya Curle present Oriental Delight (September 13, 2008)
- Rahma Haddad in Performance 1990-2000
- Randa Kamal – United States Debut Performance
- Shimmy Dance Productions: Suzy - Learn to Bellydance – Raqs Sharqi Vol. 1-3

BOOKS

- They Told Me I Couldn't – Tamalyn Dallal
- Belly Dancing for Fitness – Tamalyn Dallal
- 40 Days And 1001 Nights, One Woman's Dance Through Life In The Islamic World – Tamalyn Dallal
- Before They Were Belly Dancers: European Accounts of Female Entertainers in Egypt, 1760-1870 – Kathleen W. Fraser
- The Belly Dance Reader (from Gilded Serpent)
- Girls of Riyadh – Rajaa Alsanea
- You Asked Aunt Rocky: Answers & Advice About Raqs Sharqi and Raqs Shaabi
- The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, And Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century

MAGAZINES & NEWSLETTERS

- Arabesque
- Habibi Publications
- OPA Newsletter
- SAHDA Newsletter

CDs

- 40 Days & 1001 Nights – Tamalyn Dallal
- 100% Arabica – Cheb Mami
- A Ceremony with Nay - Oasis
- Amira Saqati – Al Bahrr
- Arabian Masters Belly Dance
- The Art of Seduction
- Authentic Belly Dance Music
- Bellydance Superstars (Vols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
- Belly Dance by Badawist
- Best of Bellydance – Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey
- Best of Bellydance – Egypt, Lebanon, Arabia & Turkey
- Dance of 2000
- Descent of Ishtar
- Folksongs and Dances From India
- Middle Eastern & Balkan Rhythms w/ Gary Cohen
- Mohamed Roushdy
- The Most Beautiful Songs of Africa
- The Orient Beats Back – Said Mrad
- Nawal Alzoughbi
- Om Kalthom Lylat Hob
- Oriental Fantasy, Volume 5

VHS

- Amaya! (Soul of Amaya) –Technique & Performance
- Bellydance Fitness for Weight Loss featuring Rania
- Bellydance Magical Motion with Atéa and Friends
- Bellydancing with Nadia Gamal
- Cocktail Belly Dance #5
- Dances of Egypt
- Discover Bellydance with Neena & Veena: Mystic Dance
- Dalia Carella presents Dunyavi Gypsy Dance Vol. 1
- Khmer Boy Productions presents Jewel In The Jungle
- OPA Showcase (November 25, 2000)
- Janine Rabbit: Belly Dancing For Fun & Fitness
- Sohier Zakey
- Zincali Show @ Princess Mary (February 24, 2001)

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OPA Membership Form (S-36480)

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Victoria, BC
V8Z 7H6

Annual Membership Cost: \$15 CAD

Family Membership Cost: \$25 CAD

Please do not send cash in the mail!

Date: _____

Name: _____ Dance Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Are you a: Teacher Dancer Musician