



# Jasmin's Jareeda

## Ahlan We Sahlan!



To me the spring season can be described in one word - COLOR. The green grass is growing back, the flowers and trees are starting to blossom with their pink, orange, and yellow buds, and the warmer weather beckons us to shed our dark winter clothes for lighter and brighter attire. It's a time to let your imagination to run wild and make your dreams come alive.

At the dance studio we geared up to make the most of spring and its offerings. On April 19th we held our Belly Dance Bazaar from 5 p.m. – 9 p.m. at the Chicago dance school location. A good way to spruce up your dance can be as simple as getting a vibrant new hip scarf or warming up to a new disc of music!

I am proud to announce there will be several new dance teachers at the studio. Just like in baseball, we're changing our line-up and adding more superstars to our team. Your official teaching staff at the Chicago Dance School will be: me, Sonya Hohmann, and our latest additions of Jill Lewis, and Stephanie Stefanov. Look for pictures of our new teachers in the next issue.

The word "inspire" means to breathe in. Take the time to breathe in the colors and essence of this season. Let it transform you in how you live everyday and express yourself through dance. Always strive to find new ways to be inspired by your art: go see a performance, read a book on the subject, or learn a new movement. Read this issue's 'Inspirational Insights' for my suggestion this month on how to do this.

As always it gives me great pleasure to share with you my pleasure for authentic Middle Eastern Dance. Thank you for joining me on my continual crusade to uphold this art form with dignity and grace.

*"I am the bow from which students as arrows fly forth."*

*- The Prophet by Khalil Gibran*



**Class Notes:  
Ballet for Belly  
Dancers is Booming!**



Due to popular demand we've just opened another Ballet for Belly Dancers during the week.

You can take this class on Tuesdays 8:15 – 9:15 p.m. or Thursdays 7-8 p.m

## Student Testimonial

"As a former student, I just wanted to contact you to say how much I appreciate you as a teacher and dancer. I began taking classes from you at the Dancers Delight studio, and continued on at your studio as well as catching classes in the suburbs when I could. I am now living in Memphis, Tennessee.

Having you as an instructor instilled in me a great appreciation for Oriental dance, as well as giving me the desire to continue to study this beautiful and fascinating art form. I am lucky to have two dance studios in my area that I am able to take classes at.

I have fond memories of the time I was able to spend learning from your instruction, and I continue to practice along with your videos at home. I even regularly practice two of your level 1 choreographies that are still engrained in my memory.

So once again, thank you for sharing your talent and wisdom with students like myself.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Isaksen

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## Behind the Veil: Jasmin's Pick of the Month

Say It In Arabic: : Raks Sharki

Loosely translates as "Oriental Dance". The Raks is 'dance' and Sharki means 'oriental'. Native Middle Eastern speaking people do not refer to our art form as 'bellydance'. They would say we perform RAKS SHARKI (sometimes spelled 'sharqi').

### Music To My Ears

"Flying Carpet: by Claude Challe" is a 2-CD pack full of music for any mood you are in. The first disc is a lively mix of Middle Eastern music from across North Africa. The second disc is beautiful listening, mood and meditation music all accented with exotic flavors.

### What Every Dancer Should Know

Belly dancers are connected to the earth in their movements. Proper stance includes feet in parallel position, regardless if your feet are together or hip-width apart. Avoid even the slightest turn-out, especially in your shimmies! For all basic dance movements, feet should never need to be wider than your hips.

## Jasmin's Journeys

**~Dina Dance Event!~  
May 14-16, 2004  
Los Angeles, CA**

Dina is a famous belly dancer in Cairo today. She performs in the top nightclubs and in film.

**Two days of seminars:  
May 15th and 16th**

**Two shows:  
May 14th and 15th**

The May 14th show will showcase the best belly dancers from across America.

The May 15th show is a dinner/show where only Dina will perform with live music. For registration call 972-840-8450 or visit [www.littleegypt.com](http://www.littleegypt.com)



## Dare To Unleash Your Potential

### CHICAGO SHIMMYFEST

Shake up the shores of Lake Michigan at the **2004 Chicago Shimmyfest!** Having mentored with the late great Ibrahim "Bobby" Farrah, Jasmin Jahal offers you the opportunity to study in Chicago as she had once done with Bobby in New York! Recently awarded "Best Modern Egyptian Dancer 2003" by IAMED, Jasmin welcomes you to share this unique opportunity to study with an artist who cares about her students and her art.

The event opens with a Cocktail Reception on the evening of August 19th. Meet and greet your fellow workshop participants. If you like, you may volunteer to perform!

The 4-day workshop offers an intensive 20-hour challenge to the advanced/professional oriental dancer. Live drum accompaniment, structured combinations and exciting choreography! Held at Chicago's only studio devoted to the art of oriental dance, the Jasmin Jahal School of Dance, recognized by Chicago Magazine as "Chicago's Best".

Extra excitement for both dancer and enthusiast is the fabulous Gala performance, to be held on the evening of August 22 in a wonderful, professional 520-seat theater. Workshop participants are invited to perform to elevate their improvisational skills. Performance spots are limited to 15 soloists. You may also volunteer to be a model in the evening's fashion show! This fun experience is not to be missed!

More details are coming, please check the website at [www.jasminjahal.com](http://www.jasminjahal.com) to keep posted on the latest updates.

## MAY WORKSHOPS

Jasmin will be teaching two workshops May 1st and May 2nd.

**May 1st** – Super Shimmy. Held at 12 South Michigan, 5th floor in the Callanetics Studio, from 1-3pm. \$30 per person. Please register in advance by contacting Mallory Dodds at 708-799-8776 or [mallory@callanetics.com](mailto:mallory@callanetics.com)

**May 2nd** – Bellies and Buns. Contact the Buffalo Grove Park District. Call in advance (847) 850-2100 by the Wednesday before the date of the workshop. This challenging technique workshop will focus on two major areas that every belly dancer needs to strengthen, fine-tune and empower.

**May 23rd** - Sonya will be teaching a Level 2 Choreography with Intro to Floorwork. Explore the realm of serpentine floorwork and luscious layering of movement within this exotic choreography. Music by Bassam Yazbek entitled "Snake Dance" is on the Spring 2004 Class CD. Be prepared to take notes. For more information [click here](#).

# Inspirational Insights: Use Your Head

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In the study of oriental dance, we first struggle to learn earthy hip articulation and serpentine undulations. In time, we improve our presentation by adding interesting arm movements and footwork, as well as cleaning up our body carriage. But oftentimes, I have seen belly dancers around the world fail to dance with their entire bodies. They dance from the neck down! You need to use your head, too (and not just to remember choreography). You must dance with your whole being, from head to toe. Here's some movements, suggestions and variations done with the head that will keep your dance repertoire dramatic from beginner level through professional:

**1. Head Slides:** Definition: a side-to-side motion of the head and neck, while keeping the head in an upright vertical position. Once you've mastered that clean isolation, try these ideas: a) on the first count, slide your head to the right. Then on the second count, keep your head there and quickly look to the right with your eyes. Reverse, so that the eyes always move after the head does; b) Slide your head to the right side only. On the next count, suddenly reach out with your right arm to the side in second position. Follow that on the next count by extending your right leg out to the right. It's an unusual sequence of movements all on one side of the body that makes a nice surprise; c) Experiment with changing the speed of the head slide from slow to fast or fast to slow. For example, slide your head slowly to the right, then quickly to the left and quickly to the right.

**2. Head Circle:** Definition: a slow circle is drawn from side, to back, to side, to front with the head in an upright vertical position. The circle is parallel to the floor at all times. On the back position, you may get a little double chin. Always keep your jaw relaxed and your eyes

front. Once you've mastered this isolation, try to: **a)** alternate a mix of head circle with head slide. For example, make one clockwise head circle which starts on the left side, then abruptly do 3 head slides (right-left-right) so that the head ends on the right. Then perform one counter-clockwise head circle and continue; **b)** change the speed of sequential head circles. For example, one slow circle followed by one quick circle.

**3. Head Roll:** Definition: a complete roll of the entire head, leaning ear-to-shoulder, carefully to the back, ear-to-other-shoulder, dropping chin to the chest. You can do this as a full roll or a half roll. It adds intense emotion to simply stand still and force all attention on the head roll, done best with arms crossed in front of chest or down at your sides. Once you've become comfortable with this larger movement, try to add it into other movements, such as at the end of a 3-step turn or during spins. It is exciting to perform a Head Roll followed by a Bow, as described next.

**4. Bow:** Definition: Plie', then drop the chest followed by the head. Stay down, with arms in first position, relaxed and hanging. Avoid descending so abruptly that you need to brace yourself with your hands in order to maintain balance. This is a wonderful, large movement that is quite dramatic. It could be done quickly and then held at the bottom, or slowly with the head throw as a last, quick movement. The bow must be followed by a rise. This also can be done slowly or quickly. Slowly: rise out of plie', lifting the chest and sensually holding back your hair. Quickly: rise up, tossing the hair back in a quick flip.

**5. Look:** Sometimes less is more! Definition: A sharp turn of the head to one side or the other. This could be done to the profile (directly over the shoulder) or to a diagonal to take an

abrupt look at something or someone (an audience member or fellow dancer). It's a wonderful accent that is often unexpected. Instead of looking to the side, you may try to relax the head and look downward, and then quickly look forward, directly at your audience.

**6. Head Toss:** Definition: The head tips backward in a small, quick toss, ending with a look upward at an angle, not directly up at the ceiling. My mentor, Ibrahim Farrah, was fond of describing it like this: "Look over the hill, not over the mountain". Never make any head movement too big and throaty, or it will look like whiplash! This tiny movement is excellent for completely moving the energy through your spine and shooting it upward through the ceiling. It can be done on its own as an accent, or at the end of nearly any movement, such as a turn, bodywave, or traveling step.

**7. Hair Toss:** Definition: A large Head Toss allows those with long hair to move the hair out of the face in a tasteful way, avoiding the "Cousin It" look. Simply toss the head from one side to the other or from front to back, so that the hair sweeps in that direction. This is exciting if done once or twice within a routine. Too many Hair Tosses, or ones that are performed too wildly, get old and boring really fast!

I hope you have fun attempting these suggestions and incorporating head movements into your dance routines. Only then can you dance with your full physical being. Dare to use your head! Then, when you're ready, we'll talk about the next step--moving inside the physical and incorporating your soul. But that's a topic for another time!

## BOOK 2 One-Hour PRIVATE LESSONS IN MAY and RECEIVE 10%!

Two 1-hour private lessons are regularly \$100 (\$50 per hour). With this coupon, one person may book two hours of private lessons on two separate dates in May for only \$90.

Lessons may be scheduled with either Sonya or Jasmin, and must be paid in full in advance in cash. 24-hour cancellation notice required. To schedule, contact Jasmin at 773-693-6300 or [jasmin@jasminjahal.com](mailto:jasmin@jasminjahal.com)

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Experience the Artist*

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