



Jasmin's Jareeda

September 2005 Newsletter Volume 19, Issue 19

Ahlan We Sahlan!



It's the ONE year anniversary of the dance school being at its wonderful location! What a tremendous year it's been! The school played host to such talented visiting instructors like Phaedra of NY and Abeer Will from Germany. We started the immensely popular HAFLA events for the students. Another Student Show and Shimmyfest were greeted with resounding success by students and captivated audiences.

Year two is off the ground with a big hip bump of energy! We've expanded our workshop series to include such varied topic areas as beading for belly dancers, Argentinian tango and drumming. There are more instructors coming to visit us and share their knowledge and skill. Our boutique is offering some of the most unique items for the person passionate about Mid-East dance. From one of a kind handmade jewelry by designers like Dancing Stones Jewelry and Weenerware, to the widest assortment of veils, hip scarves and other items for the fashionable belly dancer.

I'm proud to say that our dance school is what I dreamed it would be, an oasis for women. Places for women to gather in peace, create friendships, and tap into their special energy and talents. The dance school has become a special retreat from the stresses of the work day, an oasis where a woman can come and tend to her inner spirit.

It is my wish that this dream grows bigger and brighter for us all to enjoy. Thank YOU for your support and I promise the best is still yet to come. As always it gives me great pleasure to share with you my passion for authentic Middle Eastern Dance. Thank you for joining me on my continual crusade to uphold this art form with dignity and grace.

Did you enjoy a workshop, class or show?
We welcome your comments and feedback!

Send your comments to
jasmin@jasminjahal.com

Dear Jasmin,

Greetings from the Philippines. I'm your #1 fan here! I share your articles with my students and we discuss them. I have learned so much from you and the fact that you are a student of the late Ibrahim Farrak, the legend, make you are truly a rare find!

*Take care,
Mariphet*

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

- The Prophet by Khalil Gibran

Inside:

Page 2:

~ Jasmin's Journeys

Page 3:

~ Inspirational Insights

Page 4:

~ Portrait of a Real Belly
Dancer

Page 5:

~ Class Notes

~ Behind the Veil

Our new studio is one year old! Share in the joy of belly dance by registering for classes. Our next 6-week session will begin the week of October 27. Pre-registration will begin October 11. Check out the school website for full class and workshop descriptions!
www.BestBellyDanceChicago.com

Jasmin's Journeys

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, STUDIO!

Let's celebrate the studio's first anniversary at its current beautiful location! At this milestone, I'm proud to say that we have received a lot of local attention.

It was great that the Pioneer Press newspapers found us news worthy enough to run a huge wonderful article about the school and wasn't even afraid of printing a photo with a navel exposed!

The studio hosted an Open House on August 31 at which we held an Intro to Belly Dance class in the evening. The class was taught by our very own Wendy Coleman, and the studio literally burst at its seams with eager new ladies drawn to the femininity of oriental dance. We welcomed many of them to our weekly classes this fall.

The studio also participated in the Portage Park Arts Fair on September 17 and 18, drawing the attention of dance enthusiasts, local businesses, and many women who want to learn more about our specialty, the art of belly dance. With the weather extremely pleasant, the fair was a lot of fun.

On a national scale, the studio was featured in an article in the current issue of the well-known belly dance publication Habibi Magazine, the only Middle Eastern dance publication that has national recognition and can be found in bookstores like Borders.

In addition to the studio's exposure, I was personally afforded an opportunity as an artist at the top of my field to be invited as a special guest on the weekly show "Women on Top". It took courage to step out of my comfort zone and into the world of improv theater. On September 1, I joined a group of very talented actresses who made me feel safe enough to dare and participate in their professional banter, comedy, movement and even singing! They made it seem so easy, but let me tell you, I came away from this experience clearly appreciating their acting experience, quick wit and charisma. Special thanks to one of those actresses, my student, Christina Piazza!

All of this started out the studio's second official year at this location in an exciting and positive way. If this sets the pace for us, then we've got a fabulous year ahead and we're glad to be sharing it with you!

CONGRATULATIONS, JASMIN!

Top: Wendy teaching the huge Intro to Belly Dance class at our Open House on Aug. 31

Middle: Stacy and Lilia promoting our school's booth at the Portage Park Arts Fair

Bottom: Jasmin and the wonderful cast of Women On Top 2



Inspirational Insights

CHICAGO SHIMMYFEST 2005

By Jasmin Jahal

The Chicago Shimmyfest enjoyed its 3rd anniversary this past August. Three years old doesn't sound like a lot, but considering the mission of this event, it is amazing. Let's put it this way, as a dancer you know how very long just one minute of dance can feel like. Then imagine the impact of an event that keeps you dancing for five days!

During this decade when belly dance is hitting its peak in popularity, the time has come when many dancers are ready for a high level challenge in order to keep growing. There is a dire need for mentoring, which, surprisingly, is rare. As a matter of fact, dancers in any local area always seek a mentor from afar. For example, in Chicago, there are only a few true professionals that turn to me as their trusted mentor, while at the same time there are a huge number of dancers who seek my advice and guidance regularly but they live all over the globe, from as far away as the Philippines, Europe, Brazil and across North America. Why is an "outside expert" more trustworthy? Perhaps by living so far away she cannot be viewed in any way as competition, and with that threat out of the way, it is more credible that she is giving you help with your best interest in mind.

With mentoring as the mission behind the workshops and shows of the Chicago Shimmyfest, I am proud to say that each year the event grows and is attended by wonderful dancers from all over the world. This year I would even go so far as to say that we had the most positive atmosphere ever, and truly a lot of fun! This year, as every year, the event featured three parts: an opening ceremony performance, a hot theater show to live music including a stunning Fashion Show, and most importantly the 20-hour workshop. The opening ceremony was well-attended and held in the classy lobby of the St. Patrick's Performing Arts Centre. The gala show was held in the St. Pat's theater, a space which provides a professional yet intimate atmosphere. The workshop was held at the Jasmin Jahal School of Dance. It was awesome, covering improvisational skills, challenging oriental choreography with drum solo, and practicing to live drumming. From my perspective, thanks to all those who helped make it possible and all the great attendees, this year's Shimmyfest was the best one so far!

I'd like to share with you the feedback of the students themselves, in their own words. I



hope this feedback and the series of photos encourages you to join us for Chicago Shimmyfest 2006!

What were the most important things you learned at Shimmyfest?

Kassia: "Too many to list! 1) new steps; 2) that it's ok to ask a mentor for help and guidance; 3) belly dance environments can be SAFE to learn in!"

Arlene Harting Josue: "1) improvisational technique, especially the different exercises of mood, texture, etc.; 2) performance: entrances, exits, etiquette; 3) bringing emotion and mood to the dance."

Sandy Moore: "1) when to enter to live music; 2) a beautiful choreography; 3) that I can relax, center and have fun improvising to live music."

Nancy Hammond: "1) dance is the emotion in a pure space and choreography gets you there; 2) being around professional dancers is a kick up!; 3) the whole atmosphere put the dance in a new place for me."

Penny Moskus: "1) great ideas for teaching improv; 2) focus in learning a long choreography; 3) you really do exude who you are on the stage (I always knew this, but thanks for verbalizing it!)."

Would you recommend Shimmyfest to other dancers?

Roxanne Larcher: "Absolutely! For many reasons, which include a) the chance to

focus on you as a dancer; b) to challenge yourself as a dancer through choreography and performance and c) to continue the discipline of the body and mind through training and choreography."

Ahoo Kosari:

"Shimmyfest is a chance to excel as a dancer by learning how to connect yourself with your emotions, movements and work with sophisticated and beautiful choreography!"

Pat Taaffe: "It is fun! It gives you a boost to your dance technique and style."

Carsi Hughes: "This is a comprehensive learning experience that is honestly a bargain at twice the price."

Karin Newsome: "Anyone who wants to be challenged, to broaden their experience, to find others to share questions and answers to problems as a dancer, needs to come."

Kelly Swan-Gold: "Jasmin has a wealth of knowledge and she is willing to share. The environment was warm and encouraging. I felt like everyone was so supportive of everyone else. I wasn't afraid to try everything. It was very relaxed and so much fun! Can't wait to come back next year!"

General comments:

Penny Moskus: "Thank you, Jasmin! You are one of a kind, and so is this workshop. You outdid yourself this year. I think I enjoyed it even more than last year in every way. It was so nice to get to know you and your teaching better. You are incredibly inspiring."

Mary Beth O'Connor: "Thanks, Jasmin! Your hard work, caring, effort and encouragement are much appreciated! I'm glad that I have you---the very best, as my teacher and mentor."

Cecilia Saavedra: "Thanks, Jasmin, for the challenge. I am still struggling but you inspire me to work hard and I try not to get frustrated. I am having fun, fun, fun and this is a highlight of my year. It is so great to be pushed. You do that well, in an encouraging way."

CHICAGO SHIMMYFEST 2005



Hi Jasmin,

All I can say is WOW, you've done it again! Shimmyfest was so awesome! From top to bottom, start to finish, Shimmyfest was a class act. THANK YOU!!! Your artistry really came through in your choreographies, and the music you chose for us is so intricate and beautiful. You really have a unique style that cannot be duplicated. I feel very honored and lucky to train under you, and look forward to more. I am so pleased that I performed in the Gala Show, as I really want to take my performing to the next level. The orchestra was absolutely wonderful...would you please extend them a word of thanks for a job well done?!

Sincerely,
Lori Dale

Hi Jasmin,

Shimmyfest was awesome! It was the much needed break from the chaos at work that I needed. I really liked the changes from last year (talking about improv, live drummer, etc.) and after learning the drum solo, I take back everything I said about the choreography being easier. I just wanted to thank you for giving us this wonderful opportunity.

Thanks again!
Sandy Moore

Portrait of a Real Belly Dancer



All kinds of women take belly dance. That's the beauty of the art form. In class they span every ethnic background, have professional diversity and all body types are welcome. This story column was started to showcase the kinds of women who are taking class at the studio. This month's spotlight is on Gina Berardesco from Chicago, IL.

Gina won the SCRIBE Award at last year's Student Showcase. Her fellow

classmates honored her with this award because of her generosity of sharing her choreography notes with them. Not only does she share them, but the notes are so thorough and dance instructions so clear, it's a treat to be on the receiving end of them.

One reason Gina might have such a superb memory and writing skills is because she is a scientist with a doctorate in Microbiology/Molecular Biology. She is currently working for a small biotech start-up company in Chicago. Originally from New Jersey, she and her husband have been living in Chicago for the past nine years. She discovered her love for belly dance four years ago when she started taking classes with her friend. She's been a devoted student of Jasmin for all four years.

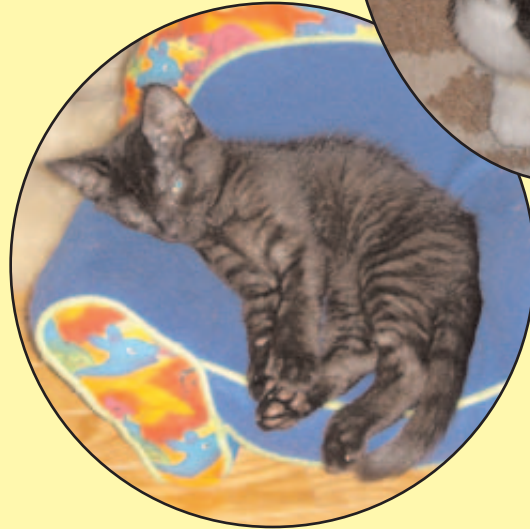
When she's not practicing her maya turns, Gina loves to relax by watching old SciFi "B" movies. She also enjoys beading and making jewelry, talking long walks through the city and despite her love of dining out, she enjoys cooking as form of relaxation.

Regarding her passion for Mid-East dance, Gina says, "I started out belly dancing to stay in shape and never expected to fall in love with the movement and the music. It's brought me a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction. I'm grateful to Jasmin for making it so accessible and fun. She's a fabulous teacher."

Gina Berardesco- another example of just one of the many types of intelligent, dynamic and fun women who belly dance.

Jasmin proudly welcomes 2 new additions to her family.

Meet Loverboy (bottom), 2 months old, 1.5 lb. and Sundae, 3 months old, 3 lb.



Behind the Veil: Jasmin's Pick of the Month

Say It In Arabic

Ghawazee: Known as the gypsies of Egypt, the term means 'invaders of the heart'. Also a vibrant gypsy dance with finger cymbals and focus on hip moves. A kaftan or tight fighting shirt or top is worn, with wide skirts and pantaloons.

Music To My Ears

MILLENIUM by Amir Sofi. Modern Egyptian, upbeat songs with two classical oriental routines included.

What Every Dancer Should Know

Don't ever forget WHY you are dancing! Life will always put obstacles in your path, and as women we tend to put ourselves last. Self-sacrificing is a kind gesture once in a while, but not healthy on a regular basis. Use stress as a motivator and promise yourself to take the time to dance. Put yourself higher on the priority list. Your soul requires it!

CLASS NOTES

Level 5 Performance October 25th!!

Jasmin and the Level 5 group are giving an hour-long performance at the Naperville Public Library at 7 pm located at 2035 S. Naper Blvd., in Naperville. The show is open to the public.

For info contact Mary Bannon at 630-961-4100 x2231 or mbannon@lib.naperville.il.us

Pay only \$5 for a new DVD of "REACH FOR THE STARS Vol.1"

If you have "Reach for the Stars Vol.1" on VHS, return the tape and pay only \$5 for the DVD version! You can trade in your VHS copy at the dance studio or pay the \$5 plus postage to have the DVD sent to you via mail. * Contact the Jasmin Jahal School of Dance for more details.

TWO SPECIAL WORKSHOPS with Special Guest Instructor ZAHRA

October 22 - Hagallah Choreography: focusing on the exciting fast movements of this famous Bedouin dance. Workshop runs 2 to 5 pm.

October 23 - Ghawazee Choreography: focusing on the earthy gypsies of Egypt known as the Ghawazee. Workshop runs 12 noon to 3 pm.

Zahra studied oriental and folkloric Middle Eastern dance with Ibrahim "Bobby" Farrah, Jajouka and Phaedra. She enhanced her studies by traveling to Egypt and Turkey where she worked with Mahmoud Reda and Ebtissam Busi and national dance companies. She also trained extensively in classical Spanish dance. Based in Michigan, Zahra performs and teaches throughout the US and Canada. She directs Troupe Ta'amullat, the first Near Eastern dance troupe recognized by the Arab Cultural Center for Economic and Social Services, the Detroit International Institute and OmniArts in Education. The Michigan Daily claims Zahra is a "natural and gifted dancer". We are proud to present such a wonderful artist in two challenging workshops!

Instructor: Zahra

Pre-registration Deadline: Contact the studio for a registration form and tuition details. Limited spots available.

Pre-requisite: intermediate or level 2 student and above

Location: 4037 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago

Dance Class Attire: Hip scarf, leotards or leggings, bare feet or dance shoes. No jeans, baggy clothes, street clothes or sweat suits.

Zahra is our Guest Star at the Halfa Dance Show on October 23 which will be held at 5pm at the Portage Park Arts Center.

See our website

www.BestBellyDanceChicago.com for more details about these fun workshops with talented instructors and experts in their fields!



Newsletter Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Jasmin Jahal

Editor & Writer: Stacy Oliver

Graphic Designer: [Cynthia Cummins](#)