

Shakira's Belly Dance Fitness's

Baladi News

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The summer has gone and school has come. This fall will mark an increase in classes and expansion of territory for Shakira's Belly Dance Fitness. The summer marked a very busy one for Shakira's Gypsy Caravan with numerous performance opportunities.

Bazaar - 14 October

Another wonderful bazaar in Ottawa is yet again scheduled for Sunday 14 October, more than likely from 12-4. The location is the same community centre in lowertown on Gignes. Flyers will soon be available and Tracey usually puts a handy map on it. I will be there and hopefully lots more useful vendors will attend again. The year before last a woman who had danced for years had a huge and eclectic collection of costumes for sale. I bought several accessories from her and I am hoping that she will re-appear. Denise Enan had a couple of sample beaded crop tops from Egypt which are apparently very popular in the US. Samira aka Vicki will be accompanying me this year and will be selling her beautiful bras to the equally obsessed dancers in Ottawa. It will be a grand time for her to get feedback on colours and styles. It looks as though my hip scarf supplier is going to send me extra wares for the bazaar and they should be arriving very shortly. There go my profits!!

CAJ vs Dominique

Up to this minute I have been carrying the CAJ flare pant. Quite a few of us are wearing them and know first hand just how comfortable they are. It is wonderful that CAJ is a small local company trying to make it in the big world of athletic wear and I am proud to have been supporting it. A glitch in this plan was my recent hands on viewing of a one piece halter flare pant combo made by a company in Quebec. I had heard about them through CAN-FIT-PRO and at Curves in Brockville. In the spring I procured a bunch of their pamphlets for us to peruse. There is quite a varied grouping of athletic wear and the front cross-over halter tops in various colours are of great use to us. I believe that I will instigate a group order from Dominique Ledoux in the fall because of the great variety of products. Almost every item comes in the 6 or so colours indicated on the pamphlet. Please ask to see it when you come to the studio.

In the meantime, here is a short note on how to best care for your CAJ flared pant. Turning your pants inside out before washing will keep them from looking faded and ragged before their time. Those of us who have hard water especially need to take care. As well, because they are a cotton mix please do not put them in the dryer; to avoid too much shrinkage in length, try hanging them to dry from the ankles (this little trick works for all your pants, especially LEGGINGS!). Please check the crotch area too every so often, as I have noticed that the structural integrity of the inset has an occasional tendency for detachment. Wash and bring them in if you would like me to stitch them up. I apologize for this problem.

Newsletter Co-Editor

Debbie Hall has recently completed a desktop publishing course and has desperately volunteered to practice her skills helping to edit and publish Baladi News. Go for it girl! I am very excited about the prospect of the troupe becoming a “team” where we all use our strengths to better the whole. I definitely do not have time to accomplish all of the plans by myself. Slowly but surely, I believe that we will become a cohesive and strong network of professional women.

Write a Story

If you would like to write an article that you feel would benefit the readers of this newsletter please feel free to submit it. It will no doubt be edited for grammatical correctness so don't be surprised. Write about your experiences at belly dance related functions, shopping finds, websites, book reviews, video reviews, or write about some tidbit of a helpful hint. This is your forum for helping other dancers and your fellow students.

Riverfest

On 30 June Shakira's Gypsy Caravan and guest entertained the troops in Brockville at Riverfest. We were situated on a lovely tented stage, albeit we had to avoid a couple of nails. The sound system was phenomenal, run by a fully competent young fellow. The crowd seemed to enjoy our dancing and we got a couple of young children into the act. As we always try to do, we ventured off the stage and into the crowd and nobody ran away. It is a big step to all of a sudden get closer to the audience (within arm's reach!) but it creates more of a connection with the people. Ashera aka Evvy Bures was our invited guest and she danced beautifully as always. Her unique and upbeat music choices are always pleasing and her supplely smooth and relaxed style of dance is always a benefit to any show. Two of my students from Brockville, Claudine and Susan, were invited to dance with the troupe. It was their premiere exposure to performing and they did wonderfully well. They each borrowed one of the “Pustu” costumes and wore their matching beaded head caps. After the performance I sent an email to the organizer of the entertainment, Rolly Evans, thanking him for allowing us to perform. He sent back a lovely thank you letter inviting us back again next year! Thanks again to Ashera, Barb, Peggy, Debbie, Claudine, and Susan for a wonderful afternoon.

Kingston Busker's Rendevous

During July Shakira's Gypsy Caravan made our much feared yet anticipated debut at the Kingston Busker's Rendevous. We had a true blast of a time and are certainly hoping we are asked back again next year. I have sent an email to the organizer Heidi Staddon letting her know what a great time we had and assuring her that we will be adding a little punch to our show next year. The other performers we saw were phenomenal. Jugglers, acrobats, magicians, thrillseekers, and other dancers and musicians - it was an honour to be apart of the whole affair. Everyone danced beautifully, even Jessica stepped away from the sound system to be able to dance Ya Leyli. Debbie made her solo debut and will have no problems performing alone now after doing it so many times in Kingston. Barb danced up a storm and never seemed to be out of energy. She admitted to me upon our return home that she had been dancing 3-4 hours a day for weeks to build up her stamina. We will all have to follow her example as doing three one hour shows a day with only an hour to rest in between felt like a marathon. Leah danced beautifully having three solos to choose from and dancing with the troupe as well. Peggy and Debbie were given Mini-Mashoura as a duet and they were really pleased to have their own little number. Next year Jessica will be able to dance more as her hand and arm will be healed.

The troupe was to be accompanied by two invited guests, Karen Phillips and Kellye Crockett, but poor Kellye had injured her back but attended one of our shows anyway. After much phone tag, Karen was able to join us for our last two shows by the water in Confederation Park. She danced to one of our favorite Loreena McInnit songs and it was breathtaking. One of the girls took a lovely photo of her which we had enlarged and we be sending along with her souvenir Busker's T-Shirt.

The Ottawa Exhibition

For two years in a row, myself and Barb and Jessica, respectively, have been invited to dance at the Ex in the OMEDA/Shen and Friends show. This year with all the wonderful talent which has grown into Shakira's Gypsy Caravan we were able to put on our own show. Eager to have make sure we had the best time slot, I contacted the Exhibition staff and was able to be the very first person to choose when we performed. I hand carried our application directly to the programmer to ensure our success. Much to our initial dismay, at the last minute, all the dance groups that were to perform on the day we chose were moved to another day. It caused me to instigate an alarmed and somewhat outraged phone call to poor Boardman Ndgamo who very diplomatically and apologetically explained that the powers that be had changed the day. Thankfully all my troupe members are profoundly good sports and all were able to change their plans to accommodate our show. Shell Canada once again sponsored the Shell Community Stage and, as always, was open concept and superbly lit. The sound technician was an extremely competent and pleasant young man who juggled our jumble of music choices like a

true professional. His machine did eat one of our tapes and a very sorrowful Leah and Javanika were unable to do their Tabel ya Habibi duet. Naturally my very professionally minded troupe members were able to jump to attention and bounce into the next number with zero amount of confusion. They all made me so proud and they make planning all of our performances a extreme pleasure. Everyone danced beautifully and looked smashing as well. Since the performance was at night, we opted for the glamorous look and everyone was able to dress-up in their most splendiferous costume attire. Mr. Ndgamo was extremely impressed with our show and no doubt we will be invited to entertain again next year.

Fall Classes

Due to the fact that my son, Liam, is going into First Grade this year and subsequently will be attending full time(!) I will have our previously free Mondays and Fridays available for more classes. I work in Ottawa part-time on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and will continue with our evening classes on Tuesday and Thursday in Kemptville. I will be teaching near Prescott at the Johnstown Community Centre on Monday and Friday mornings from 9:00-10:00. As well, I will be taking a giant leap into the big-time by teaching in Ottawa starting in October. Those lunch-hour classes will be held on Mondays and Fridays as well from 12:00-1:00 at 111A Rideau St. 3rd floor. All classes will of course be followed by the choreography extension if there is enough participants. Remember, you must have been taking my classes for at least one session and are able to travel with some of the isolations. Choreography is so much fun to learn and is a great reward for all your hard work in the dance-fitness class. I will be trying to fit in more combinations into the dance-fitness class to prepare choreography participants and to give the beginners something interesting to work on. All classes will be interchangeable, although they are not accessible for everyone. This means that if you miss a class you may make it up during any one of my other classes during the same session.

Shakira's Gypsy Caravan - The Near Future

The troupe's next known performance will be Sunday 30 September at the Keegan's Walk for SIDS, a fund-raiser for a very sad and horrifying situation. The fundraiser is an all day affair with numerous other scheduled entertainers. Please come to the Kemptville Forestry Station that day and support this eternally worthy cause.

It is hoped to have some nice pictures taken of the troupe. It has been evident this year especially how important good photos are when wanting to use them for publicity. We definitely do not take enough pictures when each other is dancing. One alternative to have pictures taken before a performance when we are all fresh. Another alternative is to gain a volunteer photographer out of our student keeners.

We will be having another Christmas Party and Show like we held last year. It went so well and we all had a great time. We had so many yummy goodies leftover, I was really pleased

with the turn-out. The show went off without a hitch, virtually, and I imagine we will continue with the same format.

Time is approaching to start planning next summer already. The Kingston's Buskers Rendevous is on our list, as is trying out for the Ottawa Busker's Festival, and the Ottawa Folk Festival. We will also keep our eye out for a lot more local fairs next year, as they are a lot of fun and extremely plentiful in the Ottawa Valley. With my growing contacts in the more southern area of Ontario, we can continue to get involved in the more touristy areas. As the troupe grows, the pressure is taken off the few to tied up all summer with every performance. This was truly evident when, although I was unable to perform at the Dandelion Festival, three of my troupe members, Leah, Javanika, and Debbie performed beautifully together. Each was uniquely dressed yet equally stunning. They put on a varied show with solos, duets, and troupe dances alike. I was so proud that they put on a professional show without me. We did learn one thing and that was the importance of using CDs or good quality tapes. The sound system was not able to properly articulate our tapes of tapes and the poor girls could hardly hear the music. Live and learn.

Hadia Workshop

The deadline for your reduced rates for the Hadia Workshop is fast approaching. Myself and four of my students will be attending the workshop and we are all looking forward to it immensely. Registration will more than likely be ongoing until the day of the event unless they reach their maximum amount of participants. There will be a gala show on the Saturday night but you should arrange ahead of time for tickets. Phone Jocelyne/Aziza of Layali Sherazad at to see if you can reserve them at the door. As well, before and after the workshop there will be a small bazaar so if you miss the larger one on the 14 October you can still find something on the 27th and 28th.

Beata and Horatio Cifuentes Workshop

Another pair of dancers that I was waiting for a workshop from are the Cifuentes. They are from Germany and were here teaching for a week the year before last. The cost was really high for that many days and I was unable to attend. Thankfully the organizer, Le Magazine Papyrus, saw fit to reduce the workshop to three days. The cost then for the three days is less than \$200. There will no doubt be another deal for a hotel room and four people can share the cost quite nicely. If you are interested in going please pick up a registration form and let me know as I will soon be making driving and lodging arrangements with companions.

Belly Dance Videos

I have found a supplier of some performance videos. They are tapes of older performances but they are entertaining and useful just the same. One is of particular interest as it is made up entirely of folkloric dances. As well, there are some nice "medleys" of performances on the

other tapes. All of them are selling for \$30 except for a tape of some really old dances which is \$25.