

Hey there, spring is coming! When I first started this issue of the newsletter I was mentioning the cold. Now its thankfully getting warmer.

Newsletter Format

I was trying a new format for the newsletter; that of a booklet. I wanted to add my partial list of performance names for dancers that I have collected over the years. I am acquiring more brave souls for the dance troupe who are interested in an exotic stage name so see if you like anything. The other reason I am experimenting with this format is because I found it hard to fit everything in the one page two column setup. I always had so much to say!

Workshops

There are many workshops going on this year, but I know of three that I would like to attend so am therefore promoting to my students. I didn't attend workshops for the first few years of my belly dance training and I sure am sorry I missed the ladies that had come to Ottawa. I didn't realize the importance of workshops until I attended my first one. That was Delilah. She was amazing and opened my eyes to the wonderful philosophy of "Earth Dancing". She harnessed the energy of the earth and allowed it to flow through her body when she moved to the point where you didn't know where she ended and the forces of the universe began. Over the years I have gained an understanding of her style and have tried to harness even a just little of the earth's energy. Another wonderful workshop was with Morocco. Her teachings were a fanatic example of perpetuating the philosophy of the Middle Eastern Culture and history. She is a healer and practices the ancient arts she learned during her studies in the Mid-East. There have been many others, each contributing more and more to my evolution as a dancer. When I was a student, no one introduced me to other dancers or the importance of learning from multiple instructors. Each workshop is very intensive. Complete days filled with learning new moves and techniques. Then, at night, a spectacular dinner event, showcasing the wonderful dancing talent of workshop attendees. Traveling together is a lot of fun, and usually the accommodation dilemma is solved by billeting or reduced hotel

rates. Here are the dates of the three workshops I want to attend, I will always let you know about anything that comes up.

20-22 Apr: Victoriaville Que: Suzzana Del Vecchio 3 day workshop \$175.

27-28 Oct: Ottawa: Hadia

21-23 Nov: Sherbrooke, Que: Beata and Horatio Cufuentes

If you only can go to one workshop this year, make it the one in Ottawa. Hadia is a very well respected instructor and dancer and she would make a fine subject for your first workshop. She is known as "Canada's best kept secret". She has spent alot of time in the Middle East stuydyng and picking up costumes so her experiences are very nourishing. I have a tape that she made of the choreography that she taught us at the workshop in London last fall. In it is she performs the choreography so that you can see what it is supposed to look like. If you haven't seen it and are curious, please ask me to show it to you.

Belly Dance Bazaar

On Sunday 4 Mar there was a belly dance bazaar held in Ottawa. This is the 3rd one and they have all been very interesting. Four of my students were able to come and shop this year, but alas the one vendor I had wished was there, wasn't. Last year, Rolanda, a dancer from years before, brought her whole inventory of costumes, there must have been at least twenty. Each one was separately created by her with headpieces, jewelry, and other ethnic accessories. She had family business out west this time out but may be able to attend in October. I have participated as a vendor in each of these events and have been pleased and facsinated by the turnout, and the wonderful items that you can find there. Most of the vendors are professional dancers who are trying to sell off old costumes so they can buy new ones. This is a great time for bargains. These women are as obsessed about costumes as I and my troupe, so you can imagine what you can find. As for new merchandise, one year Aziza sold some IceCube Imports imported Indian Jewelry and it was breathtaking. Another year, Nucreations had a table and was selling fabric and veils. This year, Denise Enan, a world renowned belly dance instructor and performer specializing in traditional Egyptian style, brought a large amount of the beaded hip scarves and a few beaded crop tops like I had seen on

the web. My supplier from Montreal will apparently be soon carrying the same beaded tops, so if she comes in October to Hadia's workshop be sure to come up for the attached bazaar. These bazaars and workshops are a great way to meet some of the dancers in Ottawa.

Christmas Show 2000

The Christmas Show and Party in Dec 00 was a huge success. It was our first

"independent" show and it went really well. Everyone who attended had a great time and all the dancers were exquisite. The whole show was caught on tape so ask to see it when you come to class. Next year, I have been asked to let the ladies in Ottawa know so they can come and join in the festivities.

Spencerville Winter Carnival

The troupe and I were invited to perform at the Spencerville Winter Carnival in January and Leah, Peggy, and I were able to attend. We were scheduled as part of the entertainment for the pancake breakfast on Sunday and I guess we opened up a few sleepy eyes. You won't believe it, but we actually embarrassed a CLOWN! The dancing was lovely and we handled ourselves really well without a sound technician.

Troupe Volunteers

This is a new issue bouncing around in my head. I know there are a few of my students who aren't feeling brave enough to dance yet, but are dying to dress up in costume. Well here is a way for your dreams to come true. As I mentioned, during our performance at the Spencerville Winter Carnival, we didn't have a sound technician. If there is anyone out there who would like to occasionally tag along on a gig and help us out, you get to wear a costume and do things like run the music or the camcorder. It would really help us out and you would still be part of the fun. Think about it!

Private Lessons

Most belly dance teachers offer private instruction to their more advanced students who are ready to perform solos. By all means, if you are getting to the point where you feel you would like intense private training to perfect your performance skills, let me know. Ask the students who have been the only attendee in one of my classes and they will assure you that a private lesson is as beneficial as several group lessons. The cost for a one hour private training session is \$30.

Mirrors

Just a reminder that if you see any second hand mirrors around let me know. I realize that the narrow mirrors are strange to look through but its better than nothing. I will be getting quotes on large custom made mirrors in Ottawa because it will definitely take forever to cover our present wall, let alone the long wall. In the meantime, the mirrors we need must be at least 4 feet tall.

Costumes

It has come to my realisation that on saturday after class is an optimum time to be at the studio to make patterns and cut out fabric. If you would like help with your costume, I highly recommend making an appointment to see me then. When laying out 5 meters of fabric it is so much more convenient to have a large area to spread it out. As well, for making patterns, it is nice not to have to rush like we have to do at the evening classes. The two classes run from 1:30-3:00 so after that would be great. This also gives us time to construct hip belt frames which are extremely important to fit properly. As well, this would be a great time to look through catalogues in a calm atmosphere and thinking about ordering parts for your costumes. We've accumulated quite a few resources for beading supplies and imported accessories.

CAJ Lifestyle Clothing

Due to my involvement with CAN-FIT-PRO I became aware of an athletic manufacturer right here in Ottawa. She does not sell to the general public but prefers to leave that to fitness studio owners instead. I made a sample purchase of a very few items and they are incredibly comfortable. She designs and makes

many items but I believe for now I will only carry the basics needed for our program. The flared legging or what I call the "dance or jazz pant" is out of this world comfortable. I feel great when I wear them. There are several styles of crop tops, a short version and a long version. I will carry both for now and will see which is more popular. The tops all have a inner lining to compensate for your choice of not wearing a bra. The pants all have a lined gusset. I am presently creating a list of sizes and will be sending her my order shortly. The pants are \$35, the short crop is \$29 and the long crop is \$35. When the order comes in I highly recommend you try the items on. They are a good alternative for days when you don't feel like dressing up in harem pants or skirts. As well, I will be getting another pair of dance pants for wearing around the house - they are that comfy! She is coming out with new colours for the spring, but for now I will stick with basic black unless there's a colour that I can't resist.

Magazines and Books

As you may be aware, I have several subscriptions to various Middle Eastern dance magazines. There are three from Canada and one from the States. They are all entertaining and useful and I am not sure which one to recommend. I have decided to set up a lending library for all my magazines, books, and videos. I will be using a card sign out system just to keep track, although everyone who has borrowed so far has been very good about bringing it back promptly. I have been getting alot of questions lately about instructional videos. There are not too many complete workout videos out there for the belly dancer. The ones I have are more for teaching the dance part of it. Neena and Veena have the best choice of instructional videos based on fitness. The problem is that no one sells them in Canada. I contacted the manufacturer in the US and they are interested in me being a distributor, but of course I must buy a huge amount of stock. As well, adding the complication of importing, duty, the exchange rate, it seems a rather distressing endeavour. I am contemplating making a mass video request based on pre-orders. This project is on my never ending list of projects

What's in a Name?

When I was finally choosing a performance name, it took a long time. Sometimes you can change your own name around to sound exotic (Diane to

Diandra), but it didn't seem to work with Nancy, and I had decided to find a name with an established meaning that conveyed something I felt. At the end of my search, I chose Shakira because it meant "grateful" and I am that, for my life (past, present, and future), my family, and my chance to dance and pass it on to others. After my search I decided that I should compile a list for other dancers. That was a few years ago and I only got up to the E's. I was looking for anything Middle, Near, or Far Eastern that sounded beautiful and meant something special. Here is my list so far, maybe you will see something. I will endeavour to continue this assignment and publish its continuence in later newsletters. Happy Hunting!

Adah	Beauty	Hebrew
Adina	Delicate	Hebrew
Airlia	Ethereal	Greek
Aldora	Winged gift	Greek
Alethea	Truth,sincerity	Greek
Alexandra	Helper of Mankind	Greek
Alexandrina	Variant of Alexandra	
Almira	Princess	Arabic
Althea	Wholesome	Greek
Alysia	Captivating	Greek
Amaryllis	Fresh or sparkling	Greek
Amber	A semi-precious jewel	Greek
Ambrosine	Immortal	Greek
Amethyst	a jewel stone	Greek
Angela	Heavenly Messenger	Greek
Anita	Grace	Hebrew
Anthia/Anthea	Flower-like	Greek
Aretina	the virtuous	Greek
Ariella	Ethereal	Hebrew
Astra	star-like	Greek
Azalea/Azelia	Flower	Hebrew
Callista/Calista	The most beautiful	Greek
Chandra	illustrious	Sanskrit name for the moon
Charmina	an attendant of Cleopatra	Greek
Chloe	Blooming	Greek
Chloris	Goddess of Flowers	Greek

Clematis	Flower	Greek	
Cleopatra	Greek Queen	Greek	
Coral	Coral of the Sea	Greek	
Coraline	elaborated form of Coral		
Corinna	maiden	Greek	
Cynara	Island in Aegean Sea now Called Zinara	Greek	
Cynthia	alternate title of moon-goddess Artemis	Greek	
Cytherea	one the of titles of Aphrodite	Greek	
Damalis	tamer or conqueror	Greek	
Damaris	Gentle	Greek	
Dara	the heart of wisdom	Hebrew	
Daria/Darya	queen or queenly	Persian	
Davina	the beloved one	Hebrew	
Delia	alternate name of moon-goddess Artemis	Greek	
Delilah/Dalila	pinning with desire/temptress	Hebrew	
Demetria	for of Demeter the goddess of fertility and harvests:	Greek	
Dianthe/Diantha	divine flower	Greek	
Kione/Diona	daughter of heaven and earth	Greek	
Doralia/Doreliaa	gift	Greek	
Dorita	divine gift	Greek	
Eden	delightful or pleasant	Hebrew	
Electra	the bright or shining/a star name	Greek	
Elora	light	Greek	
Eva/Eve	life	Greek	
Evangeline	bearer of glad tidings	Greek	
Evania	traquil	Greek	to be
continued...			

Wigs

I have decided to have an inventory clearance of all the wigs. I have tried twice to sell them at the Ottawa Bazaar and the ladies haven't caught on to how much fun the wigs are. I will still order them if someone needs me to but I shall sell off the inventory I have. I am keeping my favorites for performing but go see what's left as they will be severely

reduced. The in-stock items will be the ones on sale but even if a customer ends up ordering them they will still be a bargain.

Beaded Bras and Belts

One item that has been requested at all three bazaars was beaded bra and belt sets. They are very expensive to buy imported from Egypt - starting at \$300 (although for the amount of work involved in it is a bargain) so I may start figuring out a way to make them up so they are beautiful and fit well but aren't expensive - stay tuned...There is a bra/belt workshop going on this Sunday 18 Mar in Ottawa. The same woman who put on the bazaar is running the workshop. If you want info, please see me as I have very few details. I will give you her phone number and will try and locate and photocopy the supplies list that she gave to me. At the workshop she is planning to have everyone dismantle and cover a bra, and then make a pattern for a belt. A proper pattern for a belt is essential. The trouble is that each woman's body is different - newsflash - so there are many different belt shapes that are used as models. The website www.shira.net has a section written by the Costume Goddess which explains how to fit a belt. If you miss this workshop, not to worry, I had been planning to get everyone together for a bra/belt workshop at the studio anyway.

Kingston Busker's Festival

As you may be aware, I sent an application and audition video to see if we could perform at the Kingston Busker's Festival. Just recently I got an email confirming that we had indeed been chosen! The dates are Wednesday to Sunday 12-15 July. More than likely due to my work schedule, I will only be able to be there from Thursday night to Sunday unless at least one or more of the troupe members can be there earlier. As it stands, I believe I will be able to drum up troupe members from Friday-Sunday. Please let me know ASAP if and when you will be able to attend. Remember, sound technicians and crowd control would be positions of great asset if you don't want to dance.

I will have to find out more details but I believe that we have free lodgings at the university and free meal tickets because we are performing. We can amend our

troupe costumes to be gypsy like and then if we are able to dance at the show/wrap-up party we could wear our cabaret costumes. This event is very well organized and internationally renowned and we should feel honoured to be involved.

Veil Workshop

At the bazaar this month, Aziza/Jocelyne flew past me and let me know that she was planning a veil workshop on Saturday 31 Mar 01. She has been asked to conduct a veil workshop in Winnipeg and I think we are the guinea pigs. Aziza is a very talented veil user and attended the Shams Double Veil Workshop a couple of years ago. I was witness to her amazing performance using the two veils so we may be treated to an introduction to this technique. As soon as I find out any details I will, of course, pass on the info.

New Choreography

We have finally finished choreographing the massive 7 minute version of Mashoura. After choosing one from a choice of three new pieces of music for this session, I have changed my mind yet again after locating a long lost CD (in my car) with some very good music on it - such as life with Nancy/Shakira!