

Sumaya presents: "Windy city Shimmy"

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Clip art by Lauren

www.BellyDanceStuff.com

Chicago MECDA News

Good news, everyone! Chicago MECDA's kick-off event, "Belly Dance on Bourbon Street" was a smash. An estimated 200 people were in attendance. We raised so much money from this event, I received several responses from MECDA's board members including the president!

We also have several new Chicago MECDA

members. Welcome!

Our chapter is currently working on bringing in an instructor for a MECDA sponsored workshop in 2006. Do you want input as to who should come? Then join us today! I do believe that there is strength and recognition in numbers, and that we can make a difference if we unite in this way.



Featured Dancer: Chelcy

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Featured Dancer: Chelcy | 1 |
| Featured Workshop: Shoshanna | 2 |
| Behind the scenes of Magda's Fashion Show | 3 |
| MECDA's Belly Dance on Bourbon Street | 4-5 |
| Classifieds | 6-7 |

Interview by Sumaya Saahir

Sumaya: How did you get involved in belly dance?

Chelcy: I was in a professional ballet, tap, jazz, and modern dance company for 16 years in California when Patricia Gutierrez started teaching Turkish style belly dancing at my studio. I was always trying out new dance forms so I enrolled in her class. I loved it!!!! Three years later I quit ballet, tap, jazz, and modern and be-

gan focusing on belly dancing and salsa. Now, I've been belly dancing for twelve years in January.

S: How has belly dance changed your life?

C: I never thought in a million years that I would be a professional belly dancer and instructor! I was supposed to be focusing on art and art history. I obtained a B.A. in art history, a B.F.A. in studio art and a Certification in Gallery Practices. Sure,



I'm still painting but somehow belly dancing

(Continued on page 6)

Featured Workshop: Shoshanna

By: Sumaya Saahir

Shoshanna is warm, friendly, and with her joyous smile, instantly endearing. It is my pleasure to bring to you this write up on Shoshanna's 4 yard veil and drum solo workshop.

Shoshanna's workshop was sponsored by Chelcy Reitsma who is both a friend and avid fan of Shoshanna's. In fact, during the winter of '05 Chelcy even traveled to Shoshanna's home in northern California to complete 50 hours of private lessons with her. Amazing! (Shoshanna confessed during dinner that she pretty much taught everything she knows to Chelcy, so if you can't make it to California to learn from Shoshanna, take a private lesson with her!)

The workshop weekend kicked off on Friday September 9th, 2005 with an evening show at Arkadesh Café.

On Saturday, Shoshanna taught us 4 yard veil techniques at Belle Plaine Studio. Vending was available courtesy of Turquoise International. After some initial chit chat among the dancers and some shopping, the veil workshop began.

Shoshanna started by warming us up, with particular focus on the upper body. Since 4 yard veil technique requires a bit of strength in the upper arms and engages the rotator cuff, which can be sensitive and prone injury, Shoshanna made sure to remind us which moves we would need to be careful doing or avoid altogether.

Shoshanna is an artful dancer who is a master with her veil. It was a joy to watch her gracefully and expertly demonstrate the veil movements. Some of her moves include unique names such as The Hook, Through the Window, Wax On Wax Off, and her newest move, The Toss

and Spin.

While some of her moves are tried and true classics, Shoshanna gains inspiration for new moves from virtually everywhere, including one inspired by a Darth Mall Star Wars action figure whose dramatic pose Shoshanna incorporated into a veil toss.

The veil workshop was a lot of fun because Shoshanna kept the pace interesting by having us perform moves together in a circle. Her easy-going demeanor and sense of humor kept it lighthearted. During one move that requires a flick of the wrist to increase the veil's momentum and extend its air time, Shoshanna told us to imagine flicking it at someone as if you want it to hit them. She told us to aim at those audience members who are not looking, that will get their attention!

The next thing I knew, I looked over and a fellow workshop attendee was



aiming at my head (and you know who you are). This then caused an eruption of laughter as we were reminded of the times when you snapped a towel at a loved one. Yes,

we learned that even a silk veil can make that nice cracking sound. What fun!



Shoshanna is an improvisational belly dancer, but on Sunday she taught us a choreographed drum solo that she uses in her dance troupe, Ya Habibi. The moves that we learned also had interesting names like, Over the Cliff, and a variation of Momo's Banana that came complete with a written diagram. We also learned a side bend that Shoshanna says she is becoming known for in her dance. An alternative to the back bend, Shoshanna found inspiration for this move from one of those toys "where you pull the string and they bend in a ridiculous way." She also says that while doing this side bend, you can pretend that the roof is about to fall on you and you have to bend and raise your arms like you are protecting yourself from the pieces.

Also during the workshop, Shoshanna talked about space, movement, and energy. She says, "The tools of a dancer are space and time, so you too can use the time creatively. For example, the two. Instead of counting one, two, three four, count one, twoooo, three, four. Hold the two. Stretch that leg out a little longer as you hold that two.

For more information on Shoshanna please visit www.shoshannaland.com



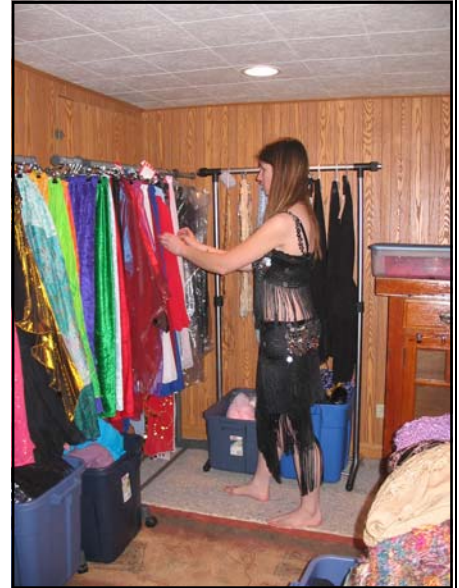
Behind the Scenes: Magda's Fashion Show

By Sumaya Saahir

On Sunday, October 8th, luck was with me. I was searching for some room dividers to create a dressing room for the Belly-Dance on Bourbon Street event. Magda had emailed me to tell me she had one and I could come over around 1 p.m. when the 'models' were set to arrive. Boy, I had no idea what sort of fun I was in for.



First a feast for the eyes, then a feast for the belly!



Ali's Indecision

Magda lives in an old house in Chicago near Oak Park. It is charming and looks like it would be at home in an enchanted woodland fairy tale. That is, until you reach her studio downstairs! You would definitely believe you were in a Middle Eastern Souk when you took a look at all of the exotic costumes, fabrics, and jewelry!

Now, I've known Magda for several years now and I am aware of the treasures she has in her possession. But to see it all set up and displayed in all its glory made me feel like a kid in a candy store, or, well, like when I was in a Belgium chocolate shop. I ogled just about everything in site.

As the models came in, I noticed they had the same reaction. But they were able to try on all of the beautiful gypsy items and sparkly belly dance costumes. I just got to watch. (Though they did try to coerce me into being a model along with them, I had to decline).

After several hours of decision



Colleen, in pink paradise!



A fusion of purple passion

and indecision each model had chosen two outfits for the Belly Dance On Bourbon Street fashion show. Then it was time to relax and dig into some Chinese take out! It's a good thing Sunday is a 'cheat day' for my diet, because Magda ordered enough food to feed a small army.

Laughing, eating, and trying on belly dance apparel...what a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Belly Dance on Bourbon Street a Smashing Success!

By Sumaya Saahir

October 14, 2005 was a groundbreaking day. The Chicago Metropolitan Chapter of MECDA held its first ever event- a kickoff fundraiser. Armed with a \$75 start-up allowance from MECDA's treasurer, I set out to finance our venture.

First, a venue had to be found, and I had the perfect spot in mind: the Southside's leading night club. Called 115 Bourbon Street. Knowing that 115 Bourbon Street had a large night club with a roomy stage and ample seating, I made an appointment with the venues event coordinator. I was in luck because the price was right. There would be no room charge because it was a not-for-profit fundraiser. The no cost price tag was definitely within our budget. All we would have to cover were the bartender fee and cost of appetizers,



Magda Photo by Ali Visona



Colleen Photo by Ali Visona

and that sounded reasonable to me. We set a date and signed the deal.

Next came advertising. Mandy of Smudge Studio (www.smudgestudios.com) created an appealing flyer for the event. I sent out emails asking dancers across the city to display the flyers for us, and they did so generously. At this time our \$75 dollars was spent.

On to the website to create an information page and ticket ordering option. We also sent out emails to those signed up at Chicago Belly Dance Meetup and Yahoo Groups to get the word out.

A call for dancers and vendors to donate their time and performances to the cause went out. A resounding YES

was the reply. Dancer's CDs, biographies and pictures came in and our Vice President made some fabulous programs.

Then came a quiet as period we waited for presale tickets to be ordered. As the deadline for the discount approached, ticket orders trickled in. We sold 50 tickets by October 7th. That combined with vendor fees gave us some money to work with.

With some money in our chapter's account, I booked a DJ and ordered 3 trays of appetizers, enough to feed 75 people. Boy were we going to need more!

The big day was upon us. Everything was set. By 7:30 p.m. volunteers came in early to set up. I had already gone over the floor plan with the event coordinator and Bourbon Street was great about

(Continued on page 5)

Belly Dance on Bourbon Street, Cont...

(Continued from page 4)

setting up tables, and being quick about my last minute instructions. We were all flying around the room, making everything look perfect. Even the waitresses were helping and by the end of the night, several were also sporting colorful hip scarves as well. By 8:00 p.m. when the doors opened we were ready to go.

The doors opened, and people came pouring in. I don't have exact numbers, but based on the money we made from ticket sales (and appetizer consumption-13 trays!), my guess is about 200 people were in attendance.

When the performances began, I was blown away with the talent. Now, I've seen all of these dancers dance before, but there must have been something in the air, because the show was electric. As Luci Ayat, our chapter's vice president said, "One word? Incredible. It was the best



Read my Hips Photo by Dancing Soul



Sumaya Saahir Photo by Ali Visona

show I've seen in Chicago to date." Many shared her opinion. I am so glad that Troup Nefertari hired a videographer to tape their dancing because he ended up taping the entire show. This is one video I will treasure forever.

Intermission included an open dance time where anyone could climb onstage and dance. It didn't take much arm twisting to fill the stage! Also during intermission was a fashion show by Magda's. The latest urban gypsy-wear and belly dance costumes were modeled by Magda's students (see page 3 for a behind the scenes look at Magda's Fashion Show).

After the second act of stellar

belly dance performances, the evening concluded with raffle prize drawings. The raffle prizes ranged from \$2 to \$75 and were generously donated by Sonya, Arabesque Dance Studio, Erika Ochoa, Magda, and myself. Again, a big thanks to the donors.

After all was said and done, this is one event I will never forget. Our dance community here in Chicago is chock full of individually talented men and women who, when they come together, do amazing things. I am so proud of us and what we have accomplished in our city. So look out, readers across the nation, Chicago is reaching for the stars!

Magda's and Samantha Wolf
Productions Present:
Belly Dance Seminar & Show
Featuring Master Instructor Amaya
November 19-20, 2005
in Forest Park, IL.



Amaya will be
instructing
Drum Solo
Choreography,
Standing & Floor
Taksim,
"Gypsy Fire," and
Stage Psychology.

For more information or to register,
visit www.GypsyMagda.com!



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maya's Café Press Store!

www.cafepress.com/BDEnchantment

(Continued from page 1)

took over my life, its practically all I do and think about these days. I just enjoy dancing more than anything else.

S: Who are the people who inspire you to higher dancing?

C: First of all myself and my students. I expect a lot out of myself and I am never satisfied with my performances. I can always do it better somehow and try to outdo my last performance. I drive myself crazy thinking like that!

Students have a lot of expectations of their teachers. I try to live up to those expectations. I also have to constantly learn new things or push myself farther because, I'm proud to say, my students are constantly improving so I'm always working to stay just ahead of them so that I always have something new to

teach them. As a perpetual student of belly dance I have found that there is nothing more disappointing than surpassing your teacher or finding out that they have taught you all they know. As far as other professional dancers go; I really admire Suhaila Salimpour and Shoshanna of California, Yasmina Ramzy of Canada, Zahra of Algeria and Fifi Abdo of Egypt.

S: Do you have any crazy zany belly dance stories to tell?

C: Not many of my own, but too many I can't mention about others mostly involving politics, sex, money and scandal. Belly dancers and musicians are crazy people!



We could have our own novela on TV!

S: What are your goals for the future (near or far)?

C: Serious goals: teaching and performance videos, my own studio, and a larger troupe. Dream Goal: A Broadway scale belly dance epic musical on world tour!

For more information, please visit
Chelly's website at
www.chellycraks.com

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Sumaya thanks Neferchichi for permission to use his Egyptian Clip Art.

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Advertisement Prices:

1 full page ad: \$25 1/2 page: \$15

1/4 page: \$10 Business card: \$5

Event listings are free!

Did you know?

- Tempest is coming to Chicago for a workshop?
- Mahira-Michelle got engaged at Kimarihi's Sizzling September Hafla? Congratulations!



Goddesses you should know: Maeve

Maeve is the Irish/Celtic goddess of responsibility. Her name means intoxicating and is associated with the word mead. Maeve is also known as a queen with a legendary sexual appetite. She is also a fierce warrior who was known to stop battles during her time of menstruation. Maeve calls you to take control of your life by taking responsibility for your words, and actions. You are in charge of your happiness!

New!

Sumaya presents...

Habibi Holidays
Café Press Store



Habibi Holiday Ornament (round)

9.99

www.cafepress.com/HabibiHolidays

Event Listings

- November 13th. Combo Workshop: Shimmi essentials/Arms with Sonya. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- November 19th-20th. Amaya Workshop. www.GypsyMagda.com
- November 27th. Costume Clinic with Sonya. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- December 3rd. Treasure Bazaar. www.shahina.com
- December 4th. Jasmin Jahal's Student Showcase. www.JasminJahal.com
- December 11th. Choreo & Improv Workshop. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- December 17. Ho Ho Habibi Hafla. www.GoddessDancing.com
- December 18th. Costume Clinic: Wrap Style Pants. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- January 14th. Hafla on the SouthSide. www.Sumaya-BellyDance.com
- January 22nd. Seduce Your Hunny Workshop. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- January 22nd. 2nd Hand Souk. www.ArabesqueChicago.com
- January 29th. Costume Clinic: Stretchy Straight Skirt. www.ArabesqueChicago.com

www.danceunitard.com



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