



# BELEDI BEAT

A quarterly publication of Jawaahir Dance Company and The Cassandra School

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## Good Friends

Over the years, many people in artistic communities around the globe have developed a unique sense of kinship with Jawaahir Dance Company. At Jawaahir's *Raqs Nouveau: Turath Wa Jadid* performance this past August at the Southern Theater, artists and audience members alike remarked about how the show—which marked Jawaahir's 20th year—is like an annual reunion of music and dance with a lively intersection of cultures. So many people feel at home “with friends and family” when they come to the performances, and consider all they have experienced a unique pleasure.

This kind of relationship is fostered by the creative commitments of the artists involved as well as the financial support of individuals and foundations who believe in the company's mission. Truly, without this support, the vibrant community that has been sustained through Jawaahir's activities would not be possible. As part of building these connections this year, the Southern Theater and Jawaahir sponsored additional workshops concurrent with the show that went beyond the performances to share the richness of Arabic music and culture. The dance company and The Cassandra School do this throughout the year with special workshops and performances, guest artists, and other events.

For many seasons over the past decade, virtuoso violinist Georges Lammam has been the musical director for Jawaahir's annual show at the Southern Theater. A Palestinian born in Beirut, Lebanon, Georges has lived and performed all over the world, and now resides in California. He's proud of his involvement in the Jawaahir productions, and is emphatic about his participation in



*Georges at Southern artists' panel*

them as part of something meaningful and exciting.

Nowhere is that sense of interrelationship more important than on stage with live musicians and dancers. According to Georges, dance theater takes musical performance in a different direction, and he relishes the challenges and rewards of working with both musicians and dancers to bring out the best in both. “We have to become part of a team,” Georges said about the process. “We have to ‘dance’ with them, follow the body movement in the music,” he added. “As a musician, what you feel playing in the moment is different.”

“When you are doing a concert for yourself, you can play your music and you are free to improvise, but when you have choreography to the music, we have to count measures so they can match steps to the music. We concentrate on both the music and dancers. If something goes wrong with the music, we throw them off. It is much harder to play.”

Jawaahir shows can also be particularly remarkable, he noted, because they are often “starting from scratch,” with the choice of music and movement for the creation of a show. It's an intensely creative process that involves a lot of trust and mutual respect from all participants.

Although there is a long tradition in the Middle East of live bands playing for dancers, it is also becoming much less common, in part, because the economics of using recorded music has changed that dynamic. In the U.S. it is downright rare. Everyone in the show's band is enthusiastic about playing for Jawaahir and appreciates the opportunity. “It's top-notch choreography,” Georges said, and adds another dimension to the music. All the more reason he believes supporting dancers and musicians in this endeavor will uphold an important tradition.

As the dance company takes this opportunity to thank its Friends, Georges wants everyone to know how much it means to him personally that so many people support Jawaahir by attending performances, spreading the word, and giving generously. “Cassandra does more for Arabic dance and culture than anyone here and abroad. She has the respect of dancers and musicians from all over,” Georges said. “She is in the forefront of promoting our culture. We're proud of what she does here and in our community.”

## Thank you!

We couldn't do what we do without our generous supporters!

### Foundations

3M Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, Heidi Heffelfinger Todd and Steve S. Todd Fund of the Community Foundation, McKnight Foundation, O'Shaughnessy Foundation, and Target

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## In-Kind

Over the last year the following companies and individuals have donated items that have enhanced every Jawaahir event — from food for the Henna party and Cabarets, through donations of all kinds for the fundraising Gala, to the paint on the walls and design services.

Larry & Caryl Abdo, Alsadu, Inc., Anonymous, Apogee Custom Gifts, Patricia Auch, Sarfaraz

Bajwa, Ballet of the Dolls & The Ritz Theater, Monique Benson, Berggren Law Offices, LLC, Bonnie Berquam, Bibelot, Black Forest Inn, Bryant Lake Bowl, Mary Lynn Buss, Tatyana Butkova, Rana & Grant Campbell-Beams, Debi Carlson, The Cassandra School, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, Chris Cherewan, Christos Greek Restaurant, Kate Coon, Nancy Courteau, Matthew Croy, Teresa De La Mora, Peg Deppe, Fantasy Grams, From the Hip, Cathy Fyelling, Jan Geisen, Great River T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Guthrie, Hauser Dance, Hoa Elm, Lenny Home, Owner of Stone Source, Inc., Jim and Sam Huonder, Indigoose Silk, Louise Indritz, Interlink Publishing Group, James Sewell Ballet, Jawaahir Board Members, Jawaahir Dance Company, Shari Jeziorski, Cat Johnson, Sarah Jones-Larson, The Jungle Theater, Amy Kirkpatrick, Landmark Theatres, Catherine Liska in memory of Orita, Maude Salon, Kathy McCurdy, Judy Meisner, Karen Meyer, Melanie Meyer, Minnesota Timberwolves FastBreak Foundation, Minnesota Twins, Minnesota Vikings, Moroccan Caravan, Oasis Dance Camp, Tim O'Keefe, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Park Tavern, Jenny Piper, Ragamala Dance, Dianna Rawnsley, Roller Garden, Mikari Safari, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Saints, Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream, Sheepskin by Susan Bradford, Cassandra Shore, The Southern Theater, Stages Theatre Company, Stained Glass Treasures, Udjat Beads, www.uptownncc.com, Victor's 1959 Café, Walker Art Center, The Wedge Community Co-op, Lori Wilczek, and Zenon Dance Company and School

## Coming Events

Cassandra's Cabaret and Boutique  
Cassandra School Showings  
Henna Party, Minneapolis studio  
Cassandra's Weeklong Intensive

November 28  
December 18-19  
January 10  
March 22-27

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