



A quarterly publication of Jawaahir Dance Company and The Cassandra School

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Caravan Under the Stars

by Patricia Cumbie (our new Beledi Beat writer!)

Most people know the work of Jawaahir and Artistic Director Cassandra Shore by attending their annual performances at the Southern Theater. What you may not know is ticket sales only pay for part of the expenses for each show, and the dance company relies on the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations throughout the year for funding. The fourth annual Caravan Under the Stars is a fantastic opportunity to support Jawaahir Dance Company and all of the programming it provides to the community.

Cathy Wurzer, host of MPR's Morning Edition and co-host of TPT2's Almanac television show, has generously contributed her talents as mistress-of-ceremonies to the event for the past three events. She does it because she believes in Jawaahir's mission to contribute to the artistic enrichment of our cities and beyond. "Jawaahir adds vibrancy to the regional cultural experience, and I think it's important to support their ability to go out into other areas." Not only that, Wurzer said, with the current economy, arts organizations everywhere need the support of their patrons. "It's so important to support those who add so much to the lives of others."

Wurzer also points to her own personal reasons for wanting to lend her talents to the gala. As a current student at The Cassandra School, she said, "It's really exciting for me to be in a class and see women of all ages, shapes, and sizes dancing together. It's a very positive atmosphere. That's one reason I continue to do it."



Helen and Heidi holding a live-auction item donated by Alsadu at the last gala

Wurzer also suggests loyal Jawaahir audience members consider encouraging gala attendance by people who might enjoy being exposed to a sampler of Middle Eastern dance and music. "It's a really fun evening out, and it offers people the opportunity to see performances, try food, and bid on some lovely items in the silent and live auction. It's wonderful support for a good cause."

Local fair trade goods importer, Donna Waldhauser of Alsadu, is also a long-time contributor to Jawaahir's annual gala. Waldhauser likes to provide items to the auctions because she believes that what Jawaahir does is congruent with other efforts to promote peace and global understanding by exposing people to the crafts and traditions of many cultures. This year she will be donating an array of items, including shawls made by Burmese women refugees living in Thailand and Nepal.

"When people are generous to Jawaahir during the auctions, it has a ripple effect," Waldhauser said. "These are crafts that help those women rebuild their lives. When you bid on those things, you are also helping them."

Preserving traditions is also very important to Salah Abdel Fattah, a Jawaahir Board member, violinist, and co-founder of Amwaj, the Arabic music ensemble. He has been a musical collaborator with Jawaahir for many years. "What Jawaahir Dance Company and Cassandra are doing is preserving an art that is struggling in its homeland and the Middle Eastern community in the U.S....The dance company is promoting not only *Beledi* (traditional Egyptian soloist) dance, but also folkloric dance from all over Arabland." The dance company's serious commitment to time-honored sounds, including instruments like *tabla*, *nay*, *qanoon* and *oud*, he said, makes it possible for traditional musicians to have a greater influence.

Like everyone who has participated in the gala in years past, Fattah said, "Working with Jawaahir Dance Company and Cassandra has enriched me musically and personally. I have met and performed with local and national musicians of high caliber."

The funds raised at this year's Caravan Under the Stars will help pay for musicians, costumes, set, and scenery for the Southern Theater show *Raqs Nouveau* this August, as well as Jawaahir's community outreach at schools, festivals, and other public venues. Whether you make a donation, purchase a ticket to a show, or attend Caravan Under the Stars, Cassandra and Jawaahir are grateful for any way that you help support their work.

Caravan Particulars

Caravan Under the Stars

Thursday, May 21, 2009, 6–10 p.m.
The Woman's Club of Minneapolis
410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis

Join our mistress-of-ceremonies, TPT2's Almanac co-host Cathy Wurzer, for an exciting evening with silent and live auctions, a variety of entertainment, henna artist Angela from Ancient Traditions Mehndi, appetizers, and a cash bar. Tickets are \$35 per person in advance. \$40 at the door. To purchase



Melanie Meyer, a Jawaahir Board member, and Patricia Auch, former Jawaahir Administrative Coordinator and member, coordinating check-out at our last Gala

tickets or for more information call 612-872-6050 or visit www.jawaahir.org.

Caravan Sponsors

Please consider sponsoring Jawaahir's annual gala and fundraiser: *Caravan Under the Stars*. This year we would like all funds raised from donations to directly further Jawaahir's mission. To do that, we're trying to fund this event through sponsorships. So far, these generous Friends have agreed to sponsor the Caravan:

Jean Courter of Oasis Dance Camp, in addition to donating a certificate for attending a full session of Camp, has agreed to become a Diamond sponsor!

She says she wants those two tickets to opening night for *Raqs Nouveau* at the Southern. www.oasisdancecamps.com.

Donna Waldhauser of Alsadu, Inc. has generously agreed to be an Emerald sponsor of our gala. Bring your copy of *Beledi Beat* to Alsadu's showroom for special dancer discounts, at 1400 Van Buren St. NE #160, Minneapolis, 612-789-1362, open Tuesday through Saturday, www.alsadu.com. In addition, Alsadu will donate a portion of those sales to the Jawaahir Dance Company.

Jim Huonder of Mortgages West (Jim@theritemortgage4u.com or 651-246-5519) is very pleased to be a Ruby sponsor. His wife, Sandy (Sam), became a student at the Cassandra School only a year ago but both Jim and Sandy are fans and supporters of Jawaahir. Please mention Jawaahir to get your free mortgage analysis.

Jennifer Cleasby, of From the Hip, 612-702-8226, is excited to be one of our Emerald Sponsors. She is also donating a full costume to be auctioned off at the Gala. You'll see her wearing one of her fabulous creations at the Gala so be sure to get your tickets soon.

To sponsor the Caravan, please leave a message for Kathy by May 11 by phone (612-872-6050, ext. 12) or email (bldgmgr@jawaahir.org).

Upcoming Events

Caravan Under the Stars: Jawaahir Gala and Fundraiser
Cassandra School Showings
Cassandra's Cabaret
Annual Concert Season: *Raqs Nouveau* at Southern

Thursday, May 21
June 5 & 6
Saturday, June 13
August 13–23

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