



A quarterly publication of Jawaahir Dance Company and The Cassandra School

Volume 19, Number 4 Fall 2011

Special People You'll Meet at the Festival--

Ruby Beh, Turkish Oriental

Ruby Beh is known for her passionate, physical performances as a Turkish Oriental dancer. When she's dancing, she's all in; everything she has encountered in her studies informs her unique and improvisational dance style, including her background in martial arts. Back when she was actively competing in martial arts, she felt she was spending too much time "beating up on boys." A community ed catalogue provided the impetus to try something new and feminine. "I fell in love the first day and after that it was my path," Ruby said. "That day I found my art."

Finding expression as an artist is extremely important to her because she grew up in a family of serious artists. All that she had experienced in martial arts and its reverence for learning and mastery informs her teaching and dancing today.

Ruby taught, was part of a troupe, took private lessons with a master, and studied abroad in Turkey. She also immersed herself in belly dance through studying DVDs of other dancers. She learned those DVDs inside and out, memorizing the moves, music, and choreography, and taking things one step further to improvise with the music until she felt completely comfortable with what she'd acquired from a particular DVD. Then she'd move on to another one.

Practice is at the core of her work as an artist. "You can really develop yourself when you practice. Before you know it, you're in a really creative mode. I love practicing." Ruby said that intense



Ruby Beh

practice led her to an important epiphany. "I went from doing the movements for me, to doing them to share with others." Turkish Oriental speaks to her need for a physically visceral and emotional relationship with her audiences.

Ruby has won numerous titles including 2010 Bellydancer of the World First Runner-Up and 2009 Bellydancer USA. Ruby is also a certified Pilates instructor and is featured on several instructional and performance DVDs including her own full-length instructionals: *Flawless Floorwork*, *Totally Turkish*, and *All About Arms*. Ruby currently travels worldwide bringing her energetic and joyful style to workshops and performances. When she is not traveling she resides in Las Vegas, Nevada where she teaches weekly classes and private lessons. At the Festival of Oriental Dance here in the Twin Cities, she wants people at her workshops to feel free and comfortable in their own bodies.

Dahlana, Raks Sharqi Master

Dahlana is in a class all her own as an accomplished dancer. She can best be described as the woman who has defined much of what it means to belly dance in America in the last five decades. She literally wrote the book on it, "The Art of Belly Dancing," and has studied with a literal who's-who of teachers from around the world. She has danced pretty much everywhere you can think of, and her connections to the Middle East and the dance community are deep. Dahlana's appearance as a teacher and performer for the Festival of Oriental Dance is an experience you will not want to miss.

She began her performing career in Boston in 1959. She was a showgirl in a chorus line in a show that featured some belly dancers. Dahlana loved their dancing, but also realized they got paid better and worked shorter hours. She determined then and there she was going to learn how to do it. She never set out to have a storied career; originally she just wanted to make money to get through school. But after she graduated, she realized she could still make more money dancing than holding down a job in an office.

The training to be a professional Middle Eastern dancer then was very different from what it is now. There were no teachers, classes, or schools offering instruction. Dahlana learned by immersing herself in the music and culture of the Middle East through the people she met at clubs where she danced. Through their friendship she went to parties and weddings that featured the authentic dance of people enjoying themselves at their own special events. It's something that's always informed her beautiful dancing, and she continues to feel passionate about honoring it in the art form.



Dahlena

“One thing that’s changed between then and now is the disconnect from the Middle Eastern community and Middle Eastern feeling of the dancing. The *helwa* is missing. You lose the sweetness of the dance with all those locks and poses,” Dahlena said. “You have to keep in mind you are borrowing music and dance from another culture.” That’s why she has an appreciation for what Cassandra has accomplished. “She respects traditional music, and is an artist who also respects traditional styles of dance. Her teaching and concerts are all about the dance with respect for the culture.”

Dahlena is also looking forward to coming to the Twin Cities for the Festival. “I hope we have a good time,” she said. “I’ve realized in the last few years that the dance community is really strong. We have friendships and connections that go deep. We have a unique community where dance keeps us in touch with each other and allows us to support each other.”

Thank You!

Throughout the year, Jawaahir and The Cassandra School launch an impressive amount of programming. We’d like to thank our audience members and individual supporters for their generous contributions. Our mission is ambitious, yet with the support of many people we have accomplished much of lasting value here in the Twin Cities and beyond.

Diamond (\$1000+): Patricia Auch, Theresa Kane, Christl Larson, and Jean Courter/Oasis Dance Camp

Ruby (\$500–999): Priscilla Dixon, Hanbery & Carney, P.A., Jawaahir Dance Company, Noelle Follen-Focus Financial, Eileen O’Shaughnessy, and Kristine Smith

Emerald (\$100–499): Anonymous, Ancient Traditions Mehndi, Lisa Bah, Mary Lynn Buss and Ron Simons, Mark Cadwell, Thomas Calivas and Lizbeth Voelker, Kay Hardy Campbell, Dr. Scott Carlson, Jeanette Cool,

Kate Coon, Ralph and Betty Cooper, Nancy Courteau, Craig & Janelle Dachtera, Dahl International, Dawn Doering, Douglas Dudgeon, George Ehrenberg, Felicia Elias, Salah Abdel Fattah, Eve Fieldhouse, Jeffrey Gegner, Cyndy Gunderson, Dr. Ali Hakim, Joe & Judith Hickey, James Hodges, Louise Indritz, Lauren Jeffries-Johnson, Mary Kertzman, Martha Koch, Lamis, Georges Lammam and Jeanette Cool, Sandra Jane Larson, Laura Lee, Sarah Maas, Kay Marszalek, Mediterranean Cruise Café, Dawn Meyer, Molly Morphew, Order in the Home/World Help Organization, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Jennifer Roden, Kathleen O. Shovelain, Kirsten Simon, Gloria Simon-Kuzma, TC Swing, Eden Torres, Heidi and James Waldron, and Michelle Wilson

Sapphire (up to \$99): Anonymous, Hend Al-Mansour, Lisa Backes, Sandra Brandvold, Erica Christ, Penny Coffin, Maryanne Cottrell, Melissa Downey, Siobhan Dugan, Emily Ewen, Theodora Fair, Skya Fisher, Sol and Pearl Goren, Linda Grondahl, Christine Halverson, Abdalla A. Hanafy, Marylee Hardenbergh, Libbie Henderson, Shirley Hogan, Kay Howard, Kathryn Johnson, Wadad Kadi, Jean Kerkes, Georgene Leiter Angrist, Catherine Liska, Stephanie Lundquist, Zane Madsen, Marsha McDonald, Stephanie McDonald, Sue Minor, Dale and Heidi Mischke, Nancy Perlman, Carlotta and Carl Posz, Carmine Profant, Dianna M. Rawnsley, Ivan Rosen, Mary Roth, Dawn and Eric Sommers, Kate Southwick, Raymond Terrill, Traci Toomey, Mary Turgeon, Dr. Cheryl Wall, and Denise Williamson

Coming Events (more info at www.jawaahir.org)

Festival of Oriental Dance, Jawaahir Studios, Mpls
Jawaahir at Mabel Tainter Center, Menomonie, WI
19th Annual Henna Party, Mpls
Cassandra’s Weeklong Intensive Workshop, Mpls

November 16–20, 2011
January 21, 2012
January 29, 2012
March 19–24, 2012

BELEDI BEAT is published quarterly by:
Jawaahir Dance Company
1940 Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403
612-872-6050
www.jawaahir.org, cassandra@jawaahir.org
Copyright 2011 Jawaahir Dance Company

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

1940 Hennepin Avenue, Mpls., MN 55403
DANCE COMPANY & THE CASSANDRA SCH



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #4891
Twin Cities, MN