

About Classes at Cassandra School Feb. 2008

I just returned home from a conference in Minneapolis. I did an internet search for a BD class and found your company. When I called, I got an immediate response and was able to drop in on Kathy's class. I can only say AMAZING ! I stayed for her second class because I didn't want to return to my hotel room and Kathy was very accommodating.

I have taken classes for about six months, but haven't taken them in probably as long due to my work and school load. I recently inherited a Bellydance group from a professional dancer who is moving to Florida, so I am trying to get back into classes and developing myself. I also decided that I would take advantage of my time at conferences to take classes with different instructors.

I want you to know that Kathy and her students are wonderful ambassadors for Jawaahir, the Cassandra School of Dance and the spirit of Bellydance. It was invigorating, and I hope that if you visit California in the future, you will consider the Bay area for some workshops. If you ever plan so, please let me know so I can add them to our group calendar: bellydance.meetup.com/300.

Take good care,

shimmies & smiles ;)

Marcy

What They Said About Jawaahir's 2003 Show

Leylet Al-Tarab attracted audiences from Texas, Florida, Georgia, California, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and all over Minnesota. Here's what we found in our e-mail in-box:

Faye of Atlanta, GA: "I did *not* want it to end! Hend Al-Mansour's visual art was lovely, and guest artist L'Emir Hassan Harfouche's *dabke* performances had everyone smiling, clapping, and tapping their feet. And with the perfect musical mood from the Georges Lammam Ensemble, superb staging and lighting and costuming lovely beyond my expectations — there were parts when I simply held my breath — I had chills! Simply put, Jawaahir Dance Company is phenomenal!"

Debbie of Duluth, MN: "What can I say ? Every show better than the last, every show a different flavor, with costumes perfect for the music and choreographies. Time just flew — the show ended far too soon!"

Shirley of Chisholm, MN: "It boggles my mind how Cassandra meshes the artwork and dance. The band is fantastic. The music just puts me in another mood, and Jawaahir was magnificent! Plus, I've never seen anything like Hassan before: flirtatious, very strong dancer — breathtaking. Cassandra was flawless — nothing could stop her!"

Jean of St. Augustine, FL: "Incredible as always! The music alone was worth the trip and then the dancing was equally wonderful! Pure heaven."

Enchanting Nights

by Jeanette Cool, San Francisco, CA

A summer highlight for those far from the limelight of the Minneapolis area was the spell-binding theatrical production, *Leylet al-Tarab*, presented within the vintage charm of the Southern Theater. Minnesotans are well aware of the masterful artistry of Cassandra Shore: producer, choreographer, and star. Then there are those who came from afar for a mesmerizing discovery. Having heard from my husband, Georges Lamman, about the exceptional quality of productions from Cassandra, and having seen an excerpt of a previous production at the Second Annual Conference for Middle Eastern Dance held in Southern California at Orange Coast College in 2001, I decided to go to the Heartland to see for myself.

During planning, my sister and four of her friends from my home of origin, Nebraska, decided to come along, driving in an 8-hour caravan to arrive in time for a Saturday night performance. The Nebraskans were new to Arabic culture and arts...so *Leylet al-Tarab*, Cassandra and the Jawaahir Dance Company, the dynamo L' Emir Hassan Harfouche, and the profound music presented by the Georges Lamman Ensemble, provided a mighty introduction.

Sharing their experiences: ...“What a surprise to be immersed in Arabic culture through dance, music, and food right in the middle of downtown Minneapolis. We got to talk to the artists and mingle in the after-show energy and fun. All the people were so warm and wonderful.”

“The music of the Georges Lamman Ensemble was exquisite as were the movement and rhythm of Cassandra and the Jawaahir Dance Company. This production pulled us into another world revealing inherent mysteries, lending insight and understanding. A yearly must-see production.”

One couple from our group was lured on stage into the exciting *dabke* line, moving wildly with the intense beat of the *tabul* amidst the gleeful cries of the dancers. When the last beat was drummed, our passionate “big guy” lifted both arms in victorious salute to — what else? — *tarab* perhaps: an ecstatic moment within the gift bestowed by music and dance.

And from my dear sister, “First of all, it was the very *coolest* thing to have my friends experience what Jeanette and Georges experience in the music portion of their lives. We all spoke about it when we got back home — how even more beautiful the music becomes after watching the instruments being played and the expressive dancing along with it. We especially noticed Nicole LeCorgne — her movement as she plays her instruments. We all feel that our long drive to Minneapolis was more than well worth it...BRAVO.”

A big thanks to Cassandra and the creative work of the many people who gave us truly: *Leylet Al-Tarab, a night of enchantment*.