

[<Back](#) [Print](#)

# Sarasota Shimmies!

What's Hip in Bellydance!

February 2008

## Greetings!

Welcome to a New Year of bellydance! I hope 2008 brings you love, light, happiness and, of course, plenty of shimmies!

### ~\*~Misha's Bellydance Classes~\*~

MONDAYS:  
Makibashira Dojo  
Sarasota  
6:30 pm Intro Tribal  
7:00 pm SOLANUM Tribal

WEDNESDAYS:  
Isle of Avalon  
Sarasota  
6:30 pm Basics  
7:30 pm Drills  
8:00 pm Mixed Level

\$100 per 8 week class  
session Next Classes  
Begin March 17 and  
March 19!!!

Get in shape, learn to  
\*move\*, have fun, make  
new friends:  
BELLYDANCE!

More....

## Tantalizing Taqsim

When a belly dancer performs, she often divides her set up into several distinct section. This month, we'll focus on (my favorite!) the taqsim. The taqsim, sometimes spelled taksim and pronounced "tock SEEM", is a improvised piece of music that often consists of one solo instrument. The music is often hypnotic and slow, and usually is performed by either an oud (rather like a guitar) or a kanoun (a stringed instrument somewhat like a dulcimer). A variety of movements work well in the taqsim: focus on slow, slinky, and slithery moves. Serpentine movements such as undulations, figure eights, snake arms, and body waves work well here. This is also the section of a performance where some dancers will incorporate floorwork and/or balancing into the act. Taqsim is lovely to practice as it presents a perfect time to slow down and remove ourselves from the hectic world, focusing on the beauty and pace of the music.

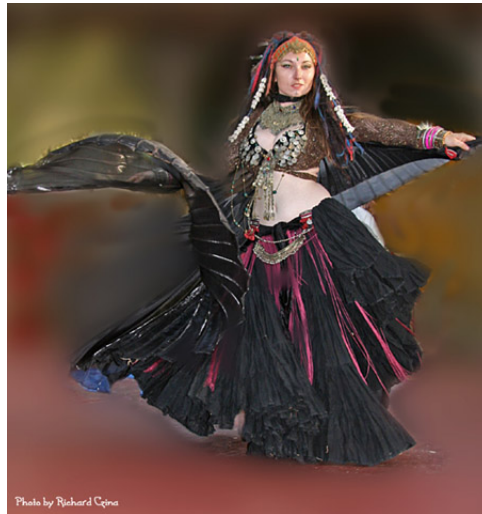


Photo by Richard Cope

## Spotlight on: Improvisational Tribal Style!

The world of belly dance is full of a variety of regional dance styles that serve to express the cultures and music of the Middle East. Within the last 30 years, however, Americans have begun to develop their own brand of unique belly dance styles. Two forms that are growing in popularity are Tribal Improv and Neo- Tribal or Fusion Belly Dance. Tribal Improv and American Tribal Style are unique improvisational formats that are built on a lead and follow type of dance. The idea of a folkloric sort of tribe was originated by Jamila

Salimpour and then developed and really transformed into its own style by Fat Chance Bellydance's Caroleena Nerrico. Now there are many different groups performing both Caroleena's ATS style as well as less strict formats (known as ITS or Improvisational Tribal Style). In either case, the performers must work together as a group, watching one another for subtle cues to match timing and moves. In Tribal Fusion, dancers generally work more as soloists and utilize a variety of movements from many different dance forms beyond belly dance including flamenco, bhangra, kathak, bollywood, thai, and even hip hop. The costumes are very different from more traditional styles too as they often utilize more modern clothing choices such as sparkly flared or ruffled pants, ripped up skirts and tops, heavy coin bras, Indian cholis, and even some dark gothic touches.

I absolutely love to dance improv tribal style because of the group dynamic and the interaction with fellow dance sisters. Tribal fusion solo work is great, too, as it lends itself to a darker, more dramatic (at times) form of belly dance that blurs the

boundaries between the traditional and the modern. If you're interested in learning this edgy dance form, I hope to expand my tribal offerings soon to be able to include more students (I know there aren't a lot of tribal classes offered in Sarasota - this is a relatively new form so there aren't a lot of teachers out there but I'm working on growing, I promise!). The best way to start is by taking any bellydance basics, though, as this will give you a firm foundation and prepare you for the muscular movements used in tribal fusion. Then you can move into the tribal classes and learn the movements specific to this style. There are lots of DVDs, too, that can serve as a supplement to classes and help give you a good idea of some basic movements. Feel free to email me for more ideas!

[More about American Tribal Style](#)

### **Move of the Month: Maya!**

This month, we'll dissect one of my all-time favorite movements: the slinky and sultry Maya. This is such a beautiful, slinky move and it matches wonderfully with the taqsim section of the dance discussed above. When executing mayas, remember that they can be done with or without lifting the foot. By pulling the heel up off the floor, you'll be able to get a "bigger" looking movement. But be careful! You do not want to twist or roll your foot as you do this. Keeping the heels flat on the floor is also an option that requires a great deal of muscular strength (If you're looking for a way to strengthen your obliques this is a great movement for it!) Remember, too, to keep your pelvis tucked as this is a movement where many dancers tend to lose their posture. To give your mayas more "oomph," consider using them on a layer. Whether you put mayas onto a traveling step, such as a rock step or a cha-cha, or decide to do a level change sinking low with slow mayas then rising up with quicker ones onto your toes, this movement can be explored in a variety of ways. Challenge yourself by putting a shimmy onto it or pair a body wave down with your mayas - the sky's the limit!



### **Misha's Students RAQ Rubonia Mardi Gras!**

A huge thanks go out to my students (pictured above!) for participating in the 2008 Rubonia Mardi Gras Parade. Much thanks go out also to those students who braved the crowds to watch and cheer us on. And, of course, we are always thankful for the presence of our Tampa dance sisters in Troupe Bal Hepsi (and Misha's awesome dance mentor Cerice Janan). And, finally, to the wonderful drummers Donovan, Brian, Jeff, Ken, and James who faithfully tromped along with us and gave us music to dance to. This was my students' first live performance and they danced beautifully! Huge 'thanks' to Cat, Mfon, Tracy, Altea, and Taryn for dressing up, looking amazing and - of course - sharing their dance. While a parade, much less a Mardi Gras-themed one, might not seem like a typical place for belly dancers these wonderful ladies proved that just about anywhere can be good for shimmying! Bellydance can be great anywhere, provided it is presented in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. If you weren't able to make it out to

this event don't worry, there will be plenty more on the horizon!  
[Lots more photos here!](#)

**Contacts**

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**Have a wonderful month!**

As always, it's \*wonderful\* to teach you all and dance with you! Much love from Misha!

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