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Sarasota Shimmies

What's Hip in Bellydance!

September 2008

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Hello Everyone!

Welcome to the September 2008 issue of Sarasota Shimmies! I hope this issue finds you all doing well and enjoying life, hopefully dancing along through ups and downs and shimmying whenever you find a free moment to yourself.

Finger Cymbals: Do I *have* to Play Them? An argument for the "dying art" in bellydance

As we wrap up an 8-week mixed level class on finger cymbals, I wanted to write a short article about these wonderful additions to a dancer's repertoire. And, yes, I *do* mean wonderful! I know many people may eyeball the zils and think, "ergh - I have to play that and DANCE at the same time?!", but it really is important to remember that these lovely instruments were once an integral part of a belly dancer's show. In modern times, fewer and fewer dancers are able to play cymbals and dance at the same time - indeed the ability to play the zils is considered by some to be a "dying" art. Once, dancers were not considered to be legitimate performers until they could shimmy and spin effortlessly with zils on their fingers. But now it seems that many dancers dread the thought of placing these tiny chimes upon their fingers. Finger cymbals, also called zils or zagat, are true instruments and are designed to be played along with the music to which you are dancing. By learning to play the zils, dancers are able to gain a better understanding of the fundamental rhythms of Middle Eastern dance, improving their overall interpretation of the music. Many dancers also find that their layering ability improves as they learn to play and dance at the same time. During this past session of mixed level class, I challenged my students to think of zils less as harbingers of doom and more as an accompaniment to their dancing. I'm proud to say that the ladies in the class have done a great job of learning cymbal rhythms and patterns, and are dancing along nicely with them. Finger cymbals are



definitely a challenge to learn, but these ladies have worked hard and have shown that with lots of practice they can be understood and played well; great job, ladies! If you missed this session of class, or want to continue to practice at home, check out my website for audio files (mp3's) of the different zil patterns and rhythms. I'm working to add more to the list, so be sure to check back often. I'm also compiling a list of good finger cymbal DVDs that will be posted shortly for those of you who would like to continue to practice on your own. These resources are for *you* so feel free to use them to practice!

[Visit my website for more info on zils and .mp3's of zil patterns!](#)

Move of the Month: Piston Hip

Most of my friends and students know that I'm a particularly huge fan of slinky, slow movements. You've all probably heard me say it before - that as a dancer moves along her (or his!) dance journey, they may discover that they are attracted to different aspects of the dance; there are some things that they seem to do better than others. I, of course, love those gooey gushy movements which means I find myself spending time to practice sharp locks and pops extra hard. For September, I'm going back to basics with the tried-and-true piston hip lock. This percussive movement, taught to most beginners, may seem simple but can provide dancers with years worth of learning! Whether you're working on the movement's speed (fast or slow) or it's size (big, little, or medium) traveling with it or maybe even varying it to include doubles or triples on one side there's lots to do with a piston hip. Remember you can do this move with either your legs OR your glute muscles - try practicing them both ways. Using the glutes will be particularly useful if you want to layer of travel with the move; legs are good for doubles and triples and also varying the size of the move. You can also practice on releve (your toes) or layer another move, like arms or chest movements, on top of it.

Adoring Audiences

Or how you can make every performer love you!





Ok, so I couldn't think of a better title for this one but, trust me, this is a super important article! Were you aware that, just as there are "rules" we follow when we bellydance there is also a similar set of etiquette for the audience members who enjoy a dancer's show? Believe it or not, there are tried-and-true ways of showing your appreciation for a dancer's performance and, if you're intending to watch a lot of dancers, it's good to know how to react and show your enjoyment. First off, every performer will *love* it if you smile at them. If you see a dancer you like, smile! It really boosts the performer's enthusiasm and comfort level. You can also zagharett! This is a sound, made by placing the tongue on the roof of the mouth and saying "la la la la la" or "le le le le le" super fast. Zagharettts are a wonderful way to express encouragement and appreciation for the dancer. The Greek word "Opa!" and the Arabic word "Yalla" are also frequently used when a dancer is performing; both translate loosely into "you go!" and can be used to cheer on the dancer. In some cases, dancers will accept tips. If you would like to tip a dancer, there are several ways to do this. Do NOT assume you can stuff money down her belt or bra! Many dancers (Misha included!) discourage body-tipping and instead utilize other methods to receive monetary appreciation. Check to see if she has a basket near her - many times the dancer will bring out a vase or basket to collect her tips. You can also do the famous "money shower" where you lightly toss dollars over the dancer's head. Otherwise, you can simply hand the tip to the dancer. If a dancer is willing to take a body tip, or encourages you to give her one instead of simply taking a tip by hand, please allow her to show you where she'd like for you to put it: the best/most common place is on the side of the hip. Try to avoid the chest and, er, pelvic areas for obvious reasons. Remember, you never have to tip a dancer to show your appreciation - just smile or zaghareet! Try it the next time you see a belly dancer perform; and enjoy the positive response you receive!

I hope all of you enjoy your dancing! Remember, I'm here to help you on your dance journey. Please feel free to contact me - I'm always happy to help out!

Happy shimmies!

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NEW CLASSES!

The next session of bellydance classes start OCTOBER 8, 2008! Basics and Mixed Level at Isle of Avalon on Wednesdays.

Basics 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Mixed Level: Tantalizing Taqsim 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Call Lourdes at 360-3070 to register today!

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