



*Master's Project Document*

2012



# The Mosaic Dance Concert Series:

## A Tapestry of Middle Eastern Dances



*By Katya Faris*



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**Keywords: tapestry, mosaic, modern, oriental, contemporary, traditional, folkloric**

Tapestry: a rug that weaves together several themes by criss-crossing two sets of yarn; in dance it refers to the idea of bringing different styles together to weave one show.

Mosaic: a pattern made of small pieces that together create one design.

Modern: used in bellydance as a contrast to “traditional”; also a style of dance, “Modern dance”, that was created in contrast to ballet by pioneer Isadora Duncan. Modern dance genres are usually named after the choreography, such as Martha Graham style.

Oriental: used in “oriental dance”; the English translation of the Arabic word, *raqs sharqi*, which means “dance of the east”.

Contemporary: a synonym for “modern”; also a sub-genre of Modern dance.

Traditional: in bellydance this often refers to folk dance traditions, or how movements have been orally passed down from generation to generation.

Folkloric: in bellydance this refers to dances that are done in the villages of the Middle East.

**Introduction:**

I chose for my Master's Thesis Project in Ethnomusicology to do a series of dance concerts focusing on Arabic Music and Dance. My goal was to arrange an array of male and female dances from many different cultures within the “Arab World” and to set it on stage. As I am preparing for a career in teaching bellydance, my goal was to create these concerts where my students could learn from “natives” and non-natives alike, men and women, so I could observe how they learned traditional folk dances and then performed them. My responsibilities included

producing, directing and performing in the shows. I hired master dancer, Mohamed Shahin, of Cairo, Egypt as the guest instructor for Mosaic I and II, and taught his choreographies to my students for Mosaic IV. I hired master Egyptian percussionist, Karim Nagi, for Mosaic III, and sponsored the Bellydance Superstars for Mosaic IV.

My aim and strategy for compiling these concerts was to showcase traditional dances with a contemporary sensibility of style, in other words folk dances that are presented in non-traditional and unique ways. I use the term “modern” in opposition to the term “traditional”; Modern dance is also a style of dance, and was created as an alternative to ballet’s rigidity. Modern ideas of stage presentation largely come from the “West”, i.e. Western Europe, so putting “Eastern” dances into this format can be difficult, lest you lose the connection to the people who created the art form that is meant to be a more social type of dance performed in smaller more intimate groups. I did the first concert in 2006, which was the year before I entered the Ethnomusicology program. I was able to have Mohamed Shahin of Egypt as my guest instructor, and he shaped the format of the show in helping with lighting and giving advice on the staging of each piece. I have included the detailed program information in the appendix of this document that explains each piece. I would also like to state that the opinions expressed below concerning Egyptian vs. Lebanese style is what I have gathered from my informants, and not my critique of what they were saying.

I would like to introduce myself, and give you an idea of my dance background to explain why this project was relevant to my learning process. I will also briefly explain who my teacher and mentors have been, and how they have influenced this project.

## **I. The Instructors' Biographies:**

### **Katya Faris**

Below I have copied my biography that I wrote from my website, as I think that the type of marketing writing would be interesting for you to see how I describe myself to my potential clients:

“Katya Faris is an international bellydancer that has been dancing in the traditions of the Middle East since she was a young girl of 11, and danced with her Persian family and friends in LA. She is the preferred dancer among Middle Eastern venues, and families, and has danced in Chicago, NYC, LA, Miami, London and Sweden, as well as upcoming shows in Detroit and Dubai. She is also a favorite model of Shahraman Palace, a bellydance costume designer in Beirut, Lebanon, and exclusively wears couture costumes made for her by Shahraman. Katya is a model and actress, and has appeared in TV commercials in the UK and the US. She is known for her graciousness and musicality, and has brought people to tears with her emotive interpretation of the music. Katya has complete command of the event when she dances, and nothing makes her happier than bringing a smile to people's faces, and joy to their hearts! She has been blessed with performing for literally hundreds of gigs in her performance lifetime, and has consistently been Indy's favorite bellydancer for restaurants, hookah cafes, and special events. She has had the honor of dancing for political dignitaries, royalty, and Hollywood actors at such exclusive private functions as the Indy Superbowl ESPN parties, corporate fundraisers, and museum exhibits. From Beverly Hills mansions to Iowa campgrounds, Katya's passion for the dance extends to all people, and she takes her job to the highest level by caring for your event with the utmost respect and attention to detail. You can trust her with entertaining you for the special occasions of your life, such as weddings and birthdays. In this age of "Instant Bellydancer Just Add Water", Katya's artistic integrity is a refreshing reminder that it takes years of practice to hone the skills necessary to be called "the real thing" by her Middle Eastern clients, and is the highest and most humbling honor she has received in her reviews. Hiring Katya means you've got a real pro!

She is a dancer adept in many regional Middle Eastern styles, as well as a dance scholar; she will receive her M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Indiana University in December, 2012. She does bellydance shows, as well as cultural education multi-media presentations on Middle Eastern folk dance and music for children of all ages. Her vast knowledge of authentic dance techniques and musical forms is matched by her subtlety, grace, and personal charm. A typical performance with Katya features her dancing in the traditions of Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish, and American cabaret style Raqs Sharqi ("Oriental Dance"), all complete with superb finger cymbal playing and veils. She also uses Isis Wings, fanveils, candles, swords and canes for her shows, and is a real crowd pleaser!

Katya has been called a "dancer's dancer". She is recently certified in Keti Sharif's Original A-Z Egyptian Dance Personal Techniques, and was a featured performer on Keti's new

DVD, "Performance Artistry ". Katya has a preview of this on her Youtube channel, and many more videos; please search for "KatyaFaris" there! She is the director of the Bloomington Bellydance Coalition, and has a troupe available when more dancers are requested, as well as live musicians, including an Arabic ensemble, and a Turkish ensemble with a singer. All of these elements make for an enchanting and inspiring performance!

Katya is currently a dancer at Lava Hookah Lounge and The Saffron Cafe, downtown Indianapolis, IN. From 2002-2006 she taught Middle Eastern Dance at Indiana University, Bloomington Campus where she was the Director of the Middle Eastern Dance Program at the Student Recreation Sports Center (SRSC). For more information of past performances, please ask for her resume.

Katya's performances always generate a great deal of energy and excitement. Audiences have responded to her dances with overwhelming enthusiasm. Her talent and loyalty to an authentic traditional style have proved to be both educational and entrancing!

She has taken workshops, master classes, private classes, and/or has been influenced by both national and international instructors such as:

- Judy Eudaly
- Faten Munger
- Dalia Carella
- Yousry Sharif
- Mona N'wal
- Laila Gamal
- Ruby Jazayre
- Delilah
- Laurel Victoria Gray
- Elena Lentini
- Marianno Parra
- Robyn Friend
- Jamal of Avaz International Dance Theatre
- Amani of Lebanon
- Eva Cernik
- Dina of Cairo

Katya has mentored with Mohamed Shahin of Cairo, Egypt, a master instructor of Egyptian dance since 2006 when she produced her first dance concert, Mosaic I. Since then she has had Mr. Shahin return to Bloomington for a total of four times, and has produced concerts and workshops for him each trip. She performed a duet with him in the Alexandrian folkdance style called "melaya leff" in the Indiana University Middle Eastern Festival 2007, as well as a workshop showcase in Chicago at the Alhambra Palace restaurant in 2008.

Ms. Faris' dance experience includes teaching and performing throughout the US. She has taught both adults and children the fundamentals of various Middle Eastern traditions of dance in both studios and educational venues. Her performances include appearances at:

- The Indianapolis Museum of Art
- The Cincinnati and Indianapolis Children's Museums
- The Murat Shrine Temple in the Egyptian Room
- The Athenaeum in Indianapolis, Indiana
- The Verizon Wireless Music Center in Noblesville, Indiana
- the Indiana State Fair
- The Buskirk-Chumley Theatre, Bloomington, Indiana
- The Minnetrista Cultural Center in Muncie, IN
- Borders Books and Music in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois
- Greek and Arabic restaurants and nightclubs
- Various ethnic festivals, benefits, and dance shows

She has performed with the Arabic band, Salaam, as their principal dancer from 1997-1999, and showcased at four of their CD release parties, the annual Middle Eastern Gala. Many of the above performances are with Salaam, as well as the Indianapolis Middle Eastern Dance Ensemble, in which Katya was co-director, along with Rebecca Reneau from 1995-1996.

Turkish Sufi musician, Latif Bolat has invited her for performances at:

- Indiana University/Bloomington
- University of Illinois/Champaign-Urbana, and
- Ohio State

### **Mohamed Shahin**

Mohamed Shahin is of Cairo, Egypt. Shahin dances the traditional male oriental dances of Egyptian Folkdance, Tanoura and Saidi Tahtib. Since the age of 14 he has had a passion for these dances. His passion led him to become a professional Oriental dance choreographer, initially in Egypt, and now throughout the world. He studied and earned his degree in dance at the famous school of El Kowmaia in Cairo. Shahin is a resident of the US and teaches throughout the country as well as internationally in places such as Russia, China, South America, and Europe. He teaches the Mahmoud Reda style Egyptian Folkloric dance, and he started his career as a dancer in the Reda Group. Shahin specialized in and teaches: Saidi, Fellahi, Melaya Leff, Nubian, Andalusi, Haggala, Baladi, Oriental (Raqs Sharki), and Tanoura.

[www.mohamedshahin.net](http://www.mohamedshahin.net)

## **Faten Munger**

A native of Cairo, Egypt, Munger is the daughter of an Egyptian composer of Arabic classical music and, therefore, began her classical piano career before her life as an Egyptian and Flamenco dancer. After receiving contracts in Italy to perform piano in the early 1970's, Faten began dancing professionally as well as an Oriental Dancer. She has since become a world-renowned teacher, performer and restaurateur of more than 30 years. She is Katya's first Egyptian teacher, and the choreographer of two of tonight's' pieces. She sponsored Mohamed Shahin in Indianapolis on May 17, 2008 for a two day workshop and evening show. Go to [www.fatenmunger.com](http://www.fatenmunger.com) for more info on Faten.

## **II. Teaching Techniques**

The aim of my concert series was to showcase the art of women's bellydance, while also educating my audience about Middle Eastern cultures. I believe our concerts in this genre can be both entertaining and informative, and could fit into the category of "edutainment", as we are educating our audience about traditional folk dances, and also new approaches to presenting those dances. I chose pieces of music that were traditional and modern to showcase folkloric pieces and classic *raqs sharqi*. I chose pieces that had the best arrangements and orchestration that I felt were suited to that particular song, as there are usually many versions of the same song available. My approach has been ethnographic, with fieldwork, interviewing, and participation observation as my main methodology. I would like to state that everything in this section on teaching, and anything that pertains to notions of nationalism in dance have been told to me by my informants during this project. It is not my place to make broad generalizations about



bellydance, but if I do not state what my informants had to say about these topics, then I feel I would be doing a discredit to documenting my research project. There have been many conflicts in my research process that arose because of the “Egyptian vs. Lebanese” debate that is so hotly contested in the bellydance world. As I am researching how natives vs. non-natives teach, documenting their ideas about what makes a dancer “authentic” ultimately comes down to these two very different kinds of bellydance. I have chosen to write about these issues from my informants perspective; it is not my place to critique their words, but simply to mirror them. I will discuss my own experience of teaching and performing over 20 years to add to what happened during the concert series, as this is a phenomenon that must be studied in depth from an historical perspective, too. My concerts simply highlighted and exaggerated some aspects of bellydance discussed below, and showed me that my experiences are not limited to these concerts, but sync up with what my informants had to say. Also, after speaking with dancers from other areas, I have seen that what I discovered in my concerts is widespread amongst other natives.

**a. Gender**

How women teach and how men teach bellydance are completely different, and this difference deserves some discussion. I asked Mohamed Shahin teach a group choreography of his to my students, and I noticed certain differences from what I had experienced with my first Egyptian teacher, Faten Munger, a woman. I will highlight the differences I have seen below, and discuss Dr. Anthony Shay's ideas of the engineer and the *bricoleur* in relationship to this phenomenon.

**Women teach:**

- Technique “roots” and “patterns” of movements; the ABC’s of dance language (in Arabic language, this is called the “jaddar” and “wazun”, or root and patterns, and is how Arab music is taught)
- Improvisation
- Stylistic differences of bellydance
- In a nurturing fashion
- Music, and musicality
- Costuming
- Makeup and hair
- Choreography

**Men teach:**

- Choreography
- Not as much basic technique
- Tendency to be more rigid in tone
- Stylistic differences of bellydance

From my experience and observation I have seen that men are much more interested in promoting their own choreographies, than teaching others how to choreograph. Also, women are known to often “hold back” from giving all of the best information, because they do not want to create rivals, even though it seems inevitable. Men will give up important information to women, but only if asked, because they are more interested in seeing their artistic creations

become well known. The female students also feel more comfortable with a male teacher sometimes, and especially if they feel that a female teacher is “holding back”.

Both women and men are seeking fame as instructors, just in different ways, however. As raqs sharqi is a woman's dance, women gain more fame for their improvisation, and men gain more fame for their choreographies. Men are more like engineers who want to construct a house through prepared blueprints, and women are more like handymen who have a tool box that they use to solve problems on the spot. This is a concept that I have borrowed from dance historian, Anthony Shay, in his book *Choreophobia* (1999). He describes the difference between the French *bricoleur*, or handy-man, and the modern engineer in problem-solving methodology. The handy-man has an improvisational approach to solving problems, and carries his tool-box with him wherever he goes so that he can approach each problem in the moment of working. The engineer is the opposite in that he is preparing a blueprint ahead of time, and does not have a tool box that is carried to the job site. In fact, many engineers do not even build what they are designing, whereas handy-men build everything they fix. Engineers are designers, and handy-men fix what has already been designed.

**Nationality:**

I have noticed that there is a distinct difference in how cultural “outsiders” teach, compared to “insiders”, which are broken down into specific countries. I will highlight these differences below:

**Outsider:**

- Tends to teach more basic technique
- Has a more “fitness” approach

- Has less knowledge of culture
- Has less knowledge of music and musicality, and therefore cannot teach it

**Insider:**

- Only teaches choreography, no break-down of technique, but in two ways:  
Follow the Leader, coined “Follow the bouncing butt” by the bellydance world;  
and western style choreography, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8, based on ballet
- Teaches “from the music”, not concerned with “fitness”
- Teaches important cultural information about dancing
- Has more knowledge of music and musicality, and teaches the musicology and musicality sides

Dina is the most famous bellydancer of the last fifteen years in Cairo, and is the standard that most bellydancers today are measured against. Her performance name is simply Dina, but her full name is Dina Talaat Sayed. She was first a dancer in the Reda Troupe before branching out into oriental dance. She is unusual in that she does not come from an entertainment family, but was raised early in her life in Italy, because her father was a political ambassador for Egypt. She is a great example of how these styles pan out into an actual classroom format for dance. I took a workshop with her in Miami at the 2005 Convention put on by Little Egypt of Dallas, Texas. Dina taught us choreography that she improvised on the spot; she did not prepare anything ahead of time. She taught in the “Follow the Leader” fashion of the East, but taught an improvised choreography that she refused to break down into 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. When the participants got increasingly frustrated with her methodology, she got a little frustrated, and said, “OK, now that we are behind closed doors, I can tell you the truth: and that is, there is no 1-2-3-

4-5-6-7-8! It is all ONE!” What she meant was that we needed to hear the music as one piece, a story, not broken down into bits and pieces. This was the first time I had heard this, as Faten Munger teaches in the ballet method, even though she is an Egyptian native. I believe this is because she is trying to elevate herself in the mind of the established dance world by using their methodology, as it seems to be an accepted fact by dancers that ballet is the highest standard of dance in the world. Non-verbal cueing to the students and not stopping the movement to explain is included in this methodology.

The way Arabic music is taught is the same way that the language is taught, which is that it is broken down into the *jadar*, the roots, and the *wazan*, the patterns. All Arabic dictionaries are organized according to this system, too. The roots are the consonants, and the patterns are the vowels. So, if you are looking up the word, *jamila*, for instance, you would look up j-m-l, and there would be other words with different vowel patterns beneath it. If the language and the music are taught like this, then why shouldn't the dance be? This is something that I have been working on, and it is an ongoing work in progress.

### **Egyptian**

According to my Egyptian dancer informants, such as Mohamed Shahin, Dina, Mahmoud Seif and Faten Munger, this nationality claims that bellydance came from Egypt, and specifically from the time of the pyramids in Ancient Egypt. There is actually no evidence that bellydance as we know it today came from this time period, because no one knows for sure what happened in those pyramids, except for the people that were in them. Since no one is alive from that time, we can only surmise that everything is speculation. However, this has not stopped Egyptians from promulgating the notion that bellydance is exclusively an Egyptian phenomenon. It certainly is a

great marketing tool for business, where the most “authentic” is considered the best. Calling others “un-authentic” on the basis that they are not Egyptian has been a unique business strategy that has gained them a lot of ground in the workshop field, where they have been quite prosperous. The fact is that bellydance as we know it today did not come to Egypt until the Ottomans invaded in 1517. As the Ottomans are Turkish, we can safely say that bellydance is historically based from Turkish culture.

Today there are two groups in Cairo that put on festivals, the “Ahlan Wa Sahlan” group, and the “Nile Festival” Group. I will break down the differences in each group below:

### **“Ahlan Wa Sahlan”**

- Is headed by Madame Raqia Hassan, dance trainer to the stars of Egyptian bellydance
- Founded in 2003
- Dina is included in this group, and she is currently known as the most famous modern Egyptian bellydancer; Dina was in the Reda Troupe at the beginning of her career
- Teaches from a non-certification standpoint; dancers do not walk away with a certification in teacher training
- Focuses on making stars, not teachers, through promoting Competition Shows

### **Nile Group**

- Headed by Mahmoud Reda, director of the Reda Troupe, the most famous folkloric troupe in Egypt

- Founded in 2005
- Teachers include many folkloric dancers from the Reda Troupe from the past and present
- Created a teacher training program
- Focuses on creating teachers, not stars, although by default if one teaches one probably performs

### **Lebanon**

I have mentored for ten years with Amani of Lebanon, and have interviewed her through email to discover the history of Lebanese bellydance. I noticed that what she said to me was completely different than what my Egyptian informants had to say, and so I feel it is important to include her thoughts on this subject. Bellydance in Lebanon also came there once the Ottomans conquered the area in 1517, according to both Amani and my new mentor, Shahraman, a famous Lebanese bellydancer, and now my costume designer. Lebanese are descended from the Phoenicians, and are Christian; their culture goes back to the time of Baalbek and the monolithic palaces that were built there. When I asked my other mentor, Amani, about historical aspect of Lebanese bellydance, she said that her teacher, the legendary Nadia Gamal, had emphasized that bellydance there came from these Phoenicians. Once again, we have a very romantic claim of something from so far in the past somehow being tied to the present; there is no doubt there was dancing done by the Phoenicians, but we do not know if it has anything to do with how people move today. The truth is that we have no idea what happened in the palaces, and we never will. Fantasy “fakelore” is fine for theatre, but if one is trying to lay claims on anything in the present as being “authentic” by using this fantasized version, then one is delusional, or a very clever marketer.

Lebanese bellydance is my personal favorite, and that is because not only is it geographically situated between Turkey and Egypt, but it is stylistically between the two, as well. Lebanon is known in the inner circles of Arab culture as having the best musicians and dancers, but you would never know this by talking to Egyptians about it. After World War 1, the French Mandate that occurred in 1920-1946 broke up the Ottoman Empire, and the French influenced Lebanese culture by looking to France for cues on fashion, and modernity. While the music that is used is Arabic, the dance style resembles Turkish dance a lot more than Egyptian, in ways of usage of floor space, doing “floorwork” (going down to the floor), and veilwork. Even the costuming is more revealing than Egyptian style, because in Egypt there is a censorship for what can be shown on television, while in Lebanon it is much more liberal.

Based on my experience, the way the Lebanese teach is similar to Egyptians, however. This really has a lot to do with the West/East approaches, which I will be covering next. There is one festival for bellydance in Beirut, the Amani Oriental Dance Festival. Amani is one of my mentors, and she has teamed up with my costume designer, Shahraman Palace Designs, for a Lebanese style bellydance festival. Shahraman and Amani both started dancing on LBC in Beirut, the Lebanese Broadcasting Channel, and then went onto teaching later in their careers. The festival focuses on creating stars and teachers, but there is no official certification yet, only a competition.

## **Turkey**

As I have stated, bellydance originally came from the courts of the Ottomans, and then evolved in Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey. Dr. Kemal Silay, the Turkish Chair at Indiana University, has shown through his research that the literature of the Ottoman courts was based on



the literature of the Persian courts in form and content (1994). As the music and the dance mirror the themes of the literature in a trickle-down effect, I feel it is safe to say that the bellydance today still mirrors the themes of the Ottoman court. As Persian literature, both secular and sacred, has at its heart Sufi themes, which involve the Lover/Beloved and Union/Separation, it is evident that *raqs sharqi* compositions have evolved from these very same Sufi themes, and also in form.

Turkish bellydance today has been largely influenced by the revolution of Kemal Ataturk, however. He took the Turkish language and homogenized it to make one solid language, rather than several dialects. He also did this culturally, by giving women a lot more freedom than they had had under the Islamic Ottomans; he turned Turkey into a secular democracy. How this influenced bellydance was by virtually blowing the lid off of standards that had been previously censored, and a sort of rebellion occurred with woman. They could now wear extremely revealing costumes to the point that they looked more akin to striptease dancers, sometimes with as little on as nipple cover pasties and a barely-there skirt. What this did to the reputation of Turkish bellydance in the eyes of other country's bellydancers was to turn them against them in a way that makes these other dancers want to distance themselves from the striptease connotation.

Since Ataturk, Turkish bellydancers have taken a few cues from their Arabic bellydancer neighbors, and have adopted popular Egyptian and Lebanese tunes to a more Turkish instrumentation and arrangement, and have also adopted more conservative costuming styles to please a more mainstream audience. However, you can still find vestiges of this stripper-esque flavor in the famous modern bellydancers Asena and Didem. My personal favorite is Tanyeli, who has a more demure stage persona, and I believe it is because she has added a more modern

Arabic nuance to her art. Asena, Didem and Tanyeli have participated in various bellydance festivals in Istanbul, where both Orientale and Gypsy festivals are numerous.

As Romany Gypsy dance has infiltrated Turkish bellydance since the time of the Ottomans, they have largely influenced modern bellydance there. Teaching styles reflect this, as their music is often played by Gypsies, even though it is of Turkish descent. I have learned from a few Turkish teachers, and their approach is a mix of the approaches discussed above. I did Turkish folkloric dance from 1996-7 with Rebecca Reneau who was co-director of our troupe in Indianapolis, and with Dalia Carella of NYC from 1996-8. Both women focused on folk and gypsy dances, and very little ballet was used in their methodology.

### **West/East Approaches**

I have discovered in my research project that there are distinct differences in the ways that “westerners” teach vs. how “easterner” teach. By West, I mean culture that is descended from Western Europe, and by Eastern I mean primarily cultures pertaining to the Middle East, or east of Western Europe in general. Russia is a dichotomy, as they are technically “eastern”, however their approach is from ballet, which started in France, and is included in the “Western” side of the equation.

I have had the fortune of speaking with Dr. Dawn Kalis, a harpsichord instructor who is a Music Professor in the IU Jacobs School of Music, who has told me about how the split in teaching that occurred in ballet. According to her, the ballet choreography was written on the sheet music above the music score, so they flowed together synergistically. This was because as the music was being played and written down in the royal courts, the dance was being created and written down, too. I have a theory about ballet and how it is taught, and other dance forms

have based their teaching on ballet. Ballet is a feudal system; it began during feudal times, and is based on the royal court culture. The King is the artistic director, and he owns the artistic license to the “land”, or the company. The serfs are the corp dancers who make up the majority of the company. They have little or no artistic input into the dance, and they must obey the “king” and his artistic whimsy. The majority of the fruit of their labor is cultivated only to give back to the “king” for his rewards (grants, funding gifts, etc.), while the serfs themselves get paid very little, and are not respected for their labor; only the soloists are recognized.

Today, only a piano is included in the ballet classroom, and it is only for drills. There is no musical explanation given to the students, and they are not taught to choreograph until many years into their training, if at all. Information is kept away from the dancers to keep them receptive to the director’s ideas, not their own. This is because a ballet company needs many corp dancers to do the bulk of the dancing in the shows, and only a few soloists. Ballet has the idea that watching many dancers of similar height and ability for an extended period is more interesting than watching a soloist for more than a few minutes. This thinking has fed into bellydance, even though our soloists typically dance from anywhere from 5-45 minutes per set, and a dancer usually does at least two sets per night.

The Eastern approach is based on following the teacher in an improvisational style class, “follow the bouncing butt” approach that was discussed earlier. Also, in an effort to become more westernized, instructors from the East often incorporate Western approaches, because they feel that it will give them more respect and credibility in the dance world at large. As methodology has been more advanced in the West for dance, they have merely jumped on the train that is already running, rather than create something entirely new that is perhaps more suited to bellydance.

### **III. Performance Studies**

I would now like to take a look at some of the performance phenomenon that surrounded my concert series, and how it affected the overall outcome of the shows. I have split the groups into three categories of perspective: director, audience and backstage. For the audience I would like to discuss what I call the social performative space, and the communication feedback loop. For the backstage phenomenon I will discuss the dancers' behavior during rehearsal, and during show time.

#### **a. Director:**

Each concert had a different venue, and this affected the outcome of the show. For the first one I did it at an on-campus site, because as a student club I got a big discount on the rent. There was no proper dressing room, so I had to bring in racks to act as privacy curtains with veils on them for my dancers, and we also had to bring in tables and chairs to make the room more amenable to changing in-between pieces during the show. Mohamed set the lights for Mosaic I, and I learned a lot from him during this show how to do this. One of the challenges of staging oriental dance is to overcome the distance between you and your audience and make it feel like a more participatory event. I learned how to create a sense of intimacy with lighting by such techniques as putting a spotlight on the performer and darkening the rest of the stage, and also by rehearsing with the correct affectation for the music. This is the theatre acting part of dance where you are telling a story, and you must maintain a character and draw your audience in.

For Mosaic II we did it at the Waldron Arts Center Auditorium, and we had real dressing rooms, and a stage that is not elevated. Having the stage on the same level as the audience was helpful in overcoming the distance between the performer and the audience, but the lights still

created a wall that was difficult to see beyond. Mohamed was there for this show, and he began to give me more reigns in the lighting directing. We did have one problem with his tanura piece, however. During the show the lighting technician put the lights too low for him to see properly and put a green spotlight on him, and this made Mohamed disoriented. He shouted out for the technician to pull up the lights a bit, because whirling fast can make you fall if you do not have proper lighting. After the show Mohamed was quite upset about it.

Mosaic III was a complete role shift, as I set the lights for the entire show, and Karim Nagi did not have much input. Another technique for creating intimacy that is employed in Arab music is to have an improvisational *taqsim*, or solo, before a composition begins to prepare the listener's mind to focus on the piece coming up. I used this technique in all three concerts, and for Mosaic III I had voiceover MP3s made of the program text so that the audience knew exactly what they were going to see next. I felt this was important from an educational perspective, as I was trying to teach my audience about the different folk dances of the Middle East.

For Mosaic IV at the Buskirk-Chumley I was only responsible for setting lights for the first half of the show, as the Bellydance Superstars did the second half, and also dancing Mohamed's role in the Saaidi group piece. By this time I had gathered enough technical information to be able to do it all by myself, and had danced at that theatre several times before with Salaam Middle Eastern Music Ensemble, so I was familiar with the stage. It is elevated and quite a distance from the audience with very bright lights that are the most blinding out of all three venues. I only had a week to prepare for Mohamed's improvisational role, and was put on the spot, but I could not let me students down. I had my students rehearse with the correct emotional feeling so that they could overcome the distance between themselves and the audience, and also had friends and family in the audience that knew when to clap to participate.

There is an expected and accepted behavior from an Arabic audience during a bellydance show, and doing things such as clapping along, or doing a ululation or “zaghareet” is common practice.

I learned a lot from directing and staging these shows, and I definitely have acquired the skills to be able to help others to stage concerts. I may or may not hold shows in the future for myself and my students, but I feel that the skills I learned can be used in creative ways working for entertainment and artistic businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, clubs, and dance studios.

**b. Audience**

**i. Social Performative Space:**

In Arabic dance the audience interaction is imperative to create an “authentic” and culturally represented performance. Without the audience engaging in the performer’s creation the artist who improvises is left with half of the equation. The artist who choreographs is still dependent upon the audience’s reaction to make an “authentic” performance, because at the heart of Arabic music lies *tarab*, or trance and musical rapture (Shannon, p136). This is the phenomenon that occurs when the musician realizes *saltana*, an altered state of consciousness where they transcend everyday time. In order for a performer to achieve *saltana*, they must have *sidq* (emotional sincerity), and *tarab*. Without these essential elements, the performance will lack *ruh sharqiya*, or Oriental spirit, and without that, it is not Arabic. I choose the word Arabic rather than Arab to describe the music, because this is what the musicians use. As bellydance is originally Turkish, it is safe to say that these ideas of what is “oriental” come from them, and the Arabs adopted them.

Communication Feedback Loop theory provides a format for us to think about all the myriad of ways that a performance is influenced. I am using Dr. Judith Hanna’s communication

feedback loop to look at my concerts. Below is Dr. Hanna's working model of dance as non-verbal communication: **Dance Semiotics: a Processual Model (Hanna, 79)**

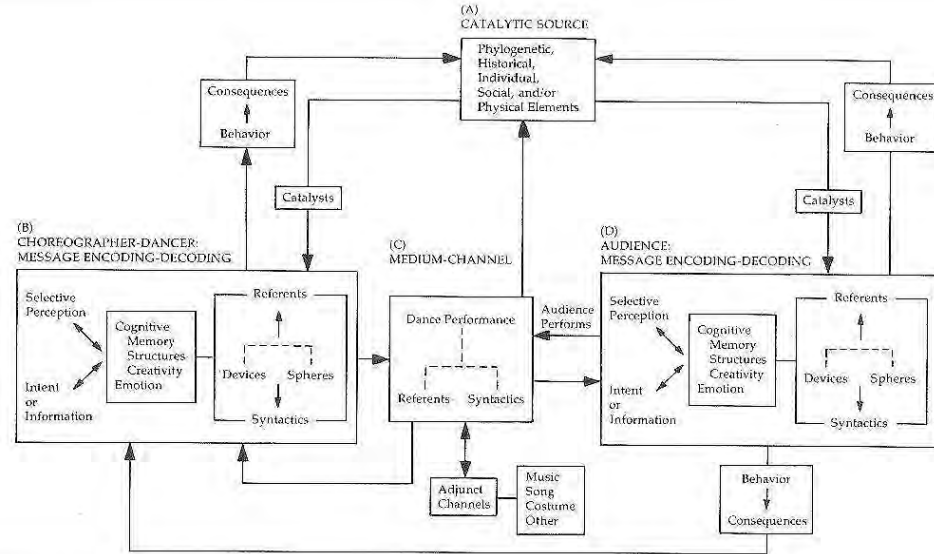


Figure 4. Dance semiotics: a processual model.

### **Communication Theory as used in Dance-**

The Communication Theory that I will employ is mainly concerned in broad terms with how humans communicate, and the meanings they ascribe to that communication. It is as basic as a sender transmitting information to a receiver, and political scientist and lead communication theorist Harold Lasswell summed it up in this working definition: "Who says what to whom in which channel with what effect." Symbolic Interactionists and Phenomenologists have latched onto communication theory, as it has to do with the individual and the development of identity to make meaning out of interactions with the larger structures of society.

(<http://communicationtheory.org/>, 4-21-11)

The invocation of the feedback loop by Doede Nauta in his book *The Meaning of Information* (Stone, p130) is in the semiotic-cybernetic model of communication, and is what Dr. Hanna uses in her semiotic model. This basically asserts that each dance performance is influenced by a myriad of feedback loops, which in turn alter the performance, and also subsequent performances in the future. This multi-channel communication model is essential to understanding that the kinesthetic channel is but one channel operating during a dance performance; also, dance is just one type of non-verbal communication.

As we can see from the diagram there are four main actors in this model:

A) **The Catalytic Source:** phylogenetic (natural world), historical, individual, social, and/or physical elements. This has catalysts that create behavior with consequences to:

B) **The Choreographer-Dancer: Message Encoding-Decoding:** selective perception, intent or information influenced by cognitive memory structures, emotion and creativity; also referents, or referring to past performances, a sort of reflexivity within the genre; this goes onto influence the:

C) **Medium-Channel:** this is the dance performance itself; it is influenced by all channels, particularly the audience and adjunct channels such as music, song choice, costume, and other factors. This leads us onto the last channel of feedback:

D) **Audience: Message Encoding-Decoding:** also uses selective perception, intent or information influenced by cognitive memory structures, emotion and creativity; also referents, or referring to past performances, a sort of reflexivity within the genre.

From this model we can see that D: the Audience, is an imperative part of the equation for an “authentic” Arabic performance to be accepted back again by A: the Catalytic Source, i.e. the culture/s.

#### IV. **Dancer behavior:**

The rehearsals that we held for each of the concerts really told me a lot about how the choreographies could be taught, or could not be taught well, and about the methodology involved to write them, and execute them properly according to the wishes of the creator and the culture. I



will take a look at each concert and discuss them separately, as I used slightly different methodologies with my dancers.

### **Mosaic I**

For this concert I was fortunate enough to have been working with my dancers for a total of almost four years at the IU SRSC (Student Recreation Sports Center), and I had been able to work on technique with them for an extended period of time before we approached choreography. I wrote all of the group pieces for this show for my dancers, and while I was pleased with my Oriental pieces, I felt that my folkloric pieces were a bit weak from a culturally “authentic” standpoint.

I had asked my first Egyptian teacher, Faten Munger, to add some pieces to the show, as I was doing an Arabic and Spanish show. She brought five dancers who did Spanish Flamenco, Egyptian, and a few fusion pieces. This was also the first time I had asked Mohamed Shahin to come and dance Saidi and Tanura, and it was because the male dancer that Faten had, Mahmoud Seif, could not do the show, as his new American wife forbade him to do it. This conflict between male dancers escalated after Mohamed agreed to do it, with Mahmoud becoming upset. Mohamed did an outstanding job of staging the show, the lighting, and generally acting as the director of the show. I was grateful for his help, and decided to continue to bring him back to Bloomington to do more shows so I could learn from him. He taught workshops, and my dancers gained a new perspective on this new emerging Modern Egyptian style of *raqs sharqi* that Mohamed teaches, as well as folkloric styles.

I also included two professional dancers from Illinois, Alexandria and Ishara Gamal. Alexandria is originally from Detroit, and after dancing there pursued her dance career

internationally in such places as Dubai, Beirut, Mexico and South Korea. She then stationed herself in Chicago, and soon became the top dancer there. She has been able to work with some of the best musicians in the industry, and I am pleased to say that she is also one of my dearest friends. We started bellydancing together in college at Butler University in Indianapolis, and I was so happy to be able to include her in the show. She did a Khaleeji solo with music that was written for her of a traditional song, “Rahib”, and a Modern Lebanese song, “Habibi Enta”, by Milhem Barakat, and rearranged for his wife in a pop club version.

Ishara Gamal used to live in Bloomington, and once she moved away she contracted breast cancer, and sadly this was the last time that she was able to perform with us. She performed Egyptian baladi, “Taht til Shebek” (Under the Window), and represented this style beautifully. She passed the next year in 2007, and I am grateful that I had this last chance to perform with her.

One thing that happened almost as soon as Mohamed arrived and I told him I was doing a Lebanese piece, was that we got into a big argument about who came first in bellydance, Lebanon or Egypt. It was a fight that resulted in me seeing his racism towards Lebanese dance, and I found out later that this is common with Egyptians. Their claim to fame in bellydance lies in their thinking that they invented it in the Pyramids, but the woman who created what we now call the Golden Era dancers who are our real grandmothers of modern *raqs sharqi* are Samia Gamal, Tahiya Carioca, and Naima Akef, was Badia Masabni. Badia was Lebanese and taught this style, and she also added a lot of ballet to her dancing that she taught these women. So, when Ms. Masabni opened the Cairo Opera Theatre in the 1940's, she was taking a Lebanese form of Ottoman bellydance, and setting it to Egyptian music. All Egyptian secular music that is used for bellydance is based on classical Arabic music, which comes from Syria. Everything the

Egyptians have come from other Arab countries, and they took it and evolved it into what we have today. But when I brought up these facts to Mohamed, he became very angry, and I realized the level of racist thinking that there is in Egypt towards Lebanon.

## **Mosaic II**

For these concerts I sponsored Mohamed Shahin again, and this time my dancers learned and performed his group choreographies. As I was in graduate school and this was the first official concert for my Thesis Project, I was not teaching at the SRSC and therefore I had less of my own dancers, and I had to hire extra. I chose to hire three dancers who were my colleagues in Indianapolis, and it proved to be a disaster in some ways. Two of the dancers are sisters, one of whom is professional, and the other is an amateur, Dancer 1 and Dancer 2. The third was a student I was mentoring at IU, Dancer 3. All three of them had ulterior motives for wanting to dance in my shows, and the rehearsals showed this.

Dancers 1&2 were not well versed in how to learn a choreography, and Mohamed Shahin was increasingly frustrated with them. I had given Dancer 1 the video of the Saidi choreography that they were to learn over the summer, and he was to “clean it up” when he got there. Dancer 2 learned her piece when he arrived, as we decided to do an extra piece at the last minute. He felt that it was not his job to teach them “how to dance”, as he said, but rather to “set” the choreography on stage, and add his part to it. As Dancer 1 had not done her homework over the summer, she was not prepared. She is the type of dancer who is great at improvising, but not very good at learning and executing choreography; Dancer 2 is the same, but she is an amateur, and not even very good at improvising yet. Watching Mohamed become increasingly frustrated with them, I could see that he was reaching his boiling point, and when he said to Dancer 2, “Do

it like this, feminine”, and when she could not do it, he said, “What, don’t you know how to move like a woman?!”, I knew we were in trouble. Her response was, “Of course, I know to be feminine, I am a woman!” It was not a pretty scene.

Dancer 3 had a different set of problems. She could learn the choreography well enough to execute it on stage, but she was always trying to take over and control things behind the scenes, particularly where it came to seducing Mohamed into taking her side in arguments. I had been dancing at The Egyptian Café in Indianapolis for two years before the show occurred, and they supplied food for sale at the show. Dancer 3 tried to steal my job behind my back there after the show, and in the end I quit, because she romantically persuaded the owner to take her side. As a professional, I have never had to steal work from anyone, it had always been given to me on my good merit. This is the dark side of bellydance that I will discuss later that I call the “Jamila Effect”.

My dance assistant, and Dancer 3, did very well in the rehearsals, because I had them prepared. They studied the video all summer, and were ready to execute it when Mohamed arrived. My dance assistant was also able to help Dancers 1&2 with their choreographic shortcomings, and act as a liason to bridge the gap between the two warring parties, and be a peacemaker. She worked with both women after Mohamed’s blowup, and taught them how to do the choreography the right way, so that the show could go on. I could not have done that show without her. I was not in the piece, and had my hands full trying to get the production to the stage, so my assistant took on the task to prepare them.

The shows themselves did well; we had 54 tickets sold for the first night, and 75 for the second. As we chose to do them at the Waldron Arts Center Auditorium we sold about half of

what we could have. It is my opinion that many dancers in town that did not dance in the show did not come, I think out of jealousy, and non-support of something that was above and beyond their scope and ability. This seems to be a common phenomenon of non-support of dancers for other dancers; in-fighting that leads to abandonment.

As a director it is my responsibility to make sure that bills are paid, and the practical matters such as producing press releases are dealt with in a timely manner. Therefore, I would like to discuss how these issues impacted the shows. I also employed Mohamed to teach workshops at the Waldron, as this is his main money-maker. He charges \$200 per dance in the show, and he did two dances per show, which totaled \$800 for two shows; \$200 per hour of teaching, which totaled \$800, for a grand total of \$1600. The ticket sale price was \$15 per ticket, and the rent of the space was \$450 per night; we made \$1935, and minus the rental we made a grand total of \$1035. As some of the ticket sales were online through the auditorium, and they saw that we did not sell out, they only charged us \$300 for the second night, which made our grand total at \$1335. As you can see, I had to pay out of pocket the difference of \$265 to Mohamed, and no one but him made money on the concert. For the workshops we charged \$50 per student for a two hour workshop, and he taught two of them. We had ten people per workshop, so we made \$1000 on the workshops; as I owed him \$800, I made \$200, which made up for what I had to pay him for the shows. Also, I had to pay for his plane ticket, which was about \$300, so I had to pay out of pocket \$365. He always stays at my house when he comes to town, so I do not have to pay for his hotel room.

Our emcee for the second night's show was disappointing to me, in that she did not seem to prepare her speech, and mispronounced several Arabic words. I quickly learned that I needed an emcee who could pronounce the words correctly, and had experience in this field.

### **Mosaic III**

For this concert I chose to have as our guest artist Karim Nagi of Egypt, a percussionist who says that he is re-imagining Egyptian percussion. He either does very classical Andalusian style, or completely contemporary fusion style. He plays for bellydancers all over the world, and teaches music and musicality for dancers. He has been a Godsend to the bellydance world for his ability to talk about things that no one else does, such as rhythms and maqams for dancers, improvisation for drum solo, and finger cymbals from a musical perspective.

The dancers were the same for this show, because it was only six months after Mosaic II. As we were working with a musician who only improvises with the dancers he works with, there was no preparation for his pieces. We all did solos, but we worked on those alone; the group piece with him was set in an easy to follow format, and they were able to improvise within that format. We did one tech rehearsal with him the day of the show, and that was all the preparation with him that we needed.

The issues that occurred in Mosaic II were present in Mosaic III, but more so with Dancer 3. I felt Karim slighted me, because I was older and larger physically than what he prefers to work with. The ideal dancer's body has changed, and now with the trend toward westernization, the more voluptuous female figure is no longer in fashion and thinner more athletic style bodies are more sought after. Although, I seem to appeal to Arab and American audiences alike, so I think it was just his preference. These were social issues, not teaching/rehearsal issues. I felt like his behavior offstage detracted from my enjoyment of the production, which is a shame, as I really enjoyed working with him professionally.

We did one concert, and we sold about 60 tickets at \$15 each, totaling \$900-\$450 for the auditorium rental, which made a grand total of \$550. He charged us \$400 for the show that had two of his performances, one group, one solo, and one duet with me, and he also taught workshops, so  $\$550 - 400 = 150$ . He taught two workshops at \$50 per student, and we had 12 students per workshop, totaling \$600. His fee was \$800, so I lost \$200 on the workshops. As I had a surplus from the show, I was only \$50 under budget, but I had to pay for his plane ticket, which was \$300, so ultimately I had to pay \$250 out of pocket.

Instead of having an emcee, I had my sister who is a voiceover artist and also a Farsi teacher, make MP3s of announcements for each piece. This worked out much better, but she still could not pronounce the Arabic exactly correctly, and used a Persian pronunciation. Things such as the letter *qaf*, while present in both languages, are pronounced completely different.

#### **Mosaic IV**

In this concert I was chosen as the Indiana sponsor for the Bellydance Superstars tour called, "Club Bellydance". This was a concert that was split into two 45 minute sets with a 20 minute intermission. We did the show at the Buskirk Chumley Theatre, and I was given a budget of \$500 to use for advertising. I put this money towards the theatre rental, as they had a budget of \$1000 to work with, and the theatre rental was \$1500 with technicians for the show, and they also do advertising, so it seemed a good choice. Our ticket sales were pretty low at around 100, and so they lost about \$200, as ticket prices were \$20 before show, and \$25 the day of the show. This time, though, it did not come out of my pocket, but rather out of Miles Copeland's. It is one year later after the show now, and I recently received a telephone call from

the Buskirk-Chumley box-office manager saying that there is a remaining balance of \$267. The Bellydance Superstars office has not responded to any inquiries into this, and has refused to pay this for the past year, but it is his name on the contract and he is responsible for this payment, not me. I believe the reason for the low attendance is because they chose to do it on a Tuesday night in a college town. Their thinking was to book the weekends in the big cities, and to book the weekdays in the smaller towns, but this backfired on them. Dancers in big cities work more on the weekend nights, as there are more places to dance, and as no dancer gets paid for these Club Bellydance shows except for the BDSS, they would prefer it to be on the weekday. Dancers in smaller towns do not have as much work on the weekends, but the audiences there are more inclined to have families, school, etc. during the week that gets in the way of a weekday show. I told them if we had done the show on a weekend, we would have gotten 300 people, but they did not listen to me, and so because of that we had low attendance. While our ticket sales were the highest out of all of the four Mosaic shows, we all expected for there to be at least 200 people, as having the BDSS usually garners a big attraction.

Miles Copeland, the manager for the rock band The Police, is the owner and director of the Bellydance Superstars. He also has a record label that promotes Arab artists called Ark 21, and is at the forefront of mainstream bellydance. It seems like an odd combination, but Miles is responsible for the Sting solo hit, "Desert Roses", and this is what catapulted him into this genre, even though he grew up in the Middle East part for part of his childhood. Jillina was the original artistic director of the BDSS, and now has her own show, called "Bellydance Evolution". Sabah Saeed was the artist director during our Club Bellydance show, and she is from Chicago.

As for the pieces in the show, we re-hashed Mohamed Shahin's Saidi group piece choreography, and added a group Khaleeji (Arab Gulf) choreography. I invited my long-time



mentor, Leila Gamal of South Bend, IN, to join us, as well as Ashley Donaldson, and my dancer of six years, Kathryn Derloshon, and a new dancer to me, Lindsay Martinez. I learned from the first two shows not to hire divas, and only have ladies who were willing to put aside their egos and work together as a group. It paid off, as they worked all summer on the choreographies both at my home dance studio and at Windfall Dance where I teach, and I was very pleased with the result.

At the last minute, Mohamed Shahin decided not to come and perform for the show, because he felt it was beneath him to not close the show in the second half, and it left me to scramble to learn his part in the group Saidi piece with one week until show time. Also, we did not have enough people signed up for his workshops, and he simply could not risk his reputation being tarnished from this. Luckily, I had seen this piece done numerous times, and just improvised the solo part of it at the beginning that he always improvised; he did the martial art double tahtib stick, and I did women's cane dance, though. However, I wish he had told me earlier in the summer, because I would have had much more time to work on it.

My approach was to show us as the traditionalists, and the BDSS as the innovators. The reason for this is because I felt that the BDSS is so good at showing fusion, but they never show a soloist for more than five minutes. Also, all of their dancers are of similar age, height and color, and I wanted to show women in all ages, shapes and sizes, but all of a very high skill level. I felt that I achieved this goal, and was told that our half of the show was more dynamic than the second half because of this.

I hired Dena El Saffar of Salaam to emcee our show, and she simply did an introduction and a closing statement. For all of the other concerts, I had someone speaking between each piece, but for this one we just flowed one piece into another, and I found it much more effective.

**i. The “Jamila Effect”**

I have noticed over years of performing, and particularly intense examples of this during my concerts, that there is a phenomenon among dancers that promotes a cut-throat atmosphere that produces a cat-fight for the best jobs. Dancers are always trying to steal the job of the dancer who has the best restaurants, hookah bars, clubs, musicians, and private parties. This is not new to bellydance, and it certainly is present in other fields of entertainment. Our flavor of this phenomenon I have chosen to call, “The Jamila Effect”, because *Jamila* means “beautiful” in Arabic, although in irony this effect is anything but beautiful.

This is how it happens: the dancer who wants to get into a certain restaurant or club will pretend to be friends with the dancer who has the job to get a chance to be put onto the schedule, and if this does not work, then she will go behind her back and talk directly with the owner; as a last result, if this does not work, she will attempt to seduce him. In a capitalistic society it seems that anyone can and should be allowed to pursue whatever job they are qualified for, but in this genre if you do this you are blacklisted as a back-stabber, and it works against you. Ultimately, all dancers get to know each other through either taking workshops or teaching them, and if you want to succeed in that world, you must be nice to everyone, or no one will come to your shows or your classes. Owners are fickle and have what I call “owner-itis”, and are prone to hiring who they want and when they want; there is no job security in this field. For a seasoned dancer to hold onto a job for a long time shows that she has superseded all of these issues, and is good

enough to let the audience decide if she stays or goes, not the owner. If the owner sees that his customers are happy, then usually he/she is happy. How this applies to my concerts is that these dancers have tried to use them to give them a leg up to catapult them to the next level of professional dancing, and take jobs from dancers who are in their way, such as me.

So, how does one start at career in bellydance at a restaurant, hookah bar, or a club? Usually it is through your teacher who sets up the gig for you, or the owner seeks you out when he is ready to switch dancers, usually because someone has been there long enough, or is retiring. It is all about being at the right place, at the right time, and being good enough when this happens. Having the right look is imperative, too; one must be “pretty enough” (good grooming and presentation), have the right kind of look that appeals to Arabs, good physical shape, and have the ability to either buy or make one’s own costumes. It is all about timing.

I taught two workshops in Naples, Florida on December 4, 2011, and interviewed my sponsor, Inara of Fire in the Belly Dance Studio, about this phenomenon and how it was impacted the bellydance there. She also concluded that this is not just something that I have experienced, she also has had similar experiences, and concurred that it seems to happen everywhere there are dancers and jobs to be had. She had a whole group of dancers leave her studio and go with another teacher who became a rival, and it disrupted her program to the point that she barely had enough people to come to my workshops. Also, one of the original Bellydance Superstars, Ansuya, is dancing in Naples now, and Inara has been studying with her. Inara is in the touchy situation of not wanting to give up her work, but also including her new teacher in the share of work that Naples has to offer. When I asked to dance as a guest at Bha Bha! Persian Bistro, it was a firm “no”, because Ansuya had not performed there yet. While I was in no way trying to steal their jobs as a guest artist visiting town, they were very touchy

about me being around the owners and patrons of their established jobs, even though my sister and I went there a month before and she spoke Farsi with them, which impressed them greatly. Sometimes this gets you an audition, but I knew better than to try to talk to the owner without finding out who dances there, and speaking with her first. I did get a chance to dance at Daniela's restaurant for the Gypsy Night on December 9<sup>th</sup>, and this ended up being a very pleasant experience. However, after we danced at the restaurant we went to see Ansuya perform at Luxor Hookah Café, and after her second set some Go-Go Dancers showed up, and tried to steal the show. It was mortifying to watch, as her mother and Inara's parents were present. The Go-Go Dancers had on leather bikinis and studs, and then a paparazzi showed up suddenly to take their picture, as if they were suddenly the star attraction. I felt so terrible for Ansuya, but she is such a strong performer, she handled the crowd with grace and elegance, and really outshined any negativity that these women threw at her.

According to one of my mentors who I have interviewed several times about the Detroit bellydance scene, recently a dancer on [www.bhuz.com](http://www.bhuz.com), a popular bellydance site, posted a thread about how another dancer showed up at the club she was working in full costume, and handed her card to the owner (<http://www.bhuz.com/business-belly-dance/67013-advice-needed-quite-hostile-situation.html>). This dancer had been trying to get sub-work and when dancer #1 did not respond, she just showed up! In Detroit, another dancer was even more extreme: she showed up at a club during another dancers show, in full costume and went straight to the stage and started dancing! The hired dancer was so appalled at this type of behavior, which was not the first time, so she quit the club scene (Warah).

## **Conclusion**

My Thesis Project was an excellent preparation for teaching bellydance, and putting on large concerts of bellydance for a dance department that has an ethnic dance component to its dance degree is an aim, as well as for entertainment businesses. I used problem-solving skills that I had not anticipated as situations arose that were unforeseen. I was forced to deal with different personalities that probably would not have worked together if I had not asked them to. I had to use my creativity and cultural knowledge to make concerts that would appeal to Arabs and non-Arabs alike. I got several excellent videos taken by our community access television station, CATS TV, and also photography that can be used for promotional purposes. I feel that we were successful, despite low ticket sales, and that each concert got better. I have decided that I do not want to do this again on my own, as it has gotten increasingly expensive to put on, but I would be willing to do this for a university or cultural institution that foots the bill. I have also decided that I need to go to Lebanon to study with my mentors, Amani and Shahraman, and I would prefer to go there first before Egypt, as this form of bellydance is older, and appeals to me on more than one level.

I feel that bellydance has become popular the world over, because it allows women to express themselves in a way that no other dance form can. At the heart of our dance is the shimmy, which along with jumping rope and jumping on the trampoline, are the only activities that are vigorous enough to get our sluggish lymphatic system moving.

*“Where Western dance explodes at the climax of the music, Oriental Dance implodes”*

*(Maleeha)*

**Appendix:**

**Program Notes for Mosaic I-IV:**

## I. Mosaic I

### “Saidi” Double Tahtib: Mohamed Shahin

Improvisation

SAIDI

The Saidi area lies in the South of Egypt and it's comprised of four big cities:

Qina

Luxor

Asyut

Suhaj

The very famous dance called the “Saidi stick dance” (Raks Al sayya) originated in this area, as well. Tahtib means a kind of dance but it is also a game between two men in which each of them holds a big bamboo stick to show their power and prowess; at the end one of them wins.

The ‘stick’ is also practiced as a pastime and used as a means of self-defense.

Through the history of dance, this particular dance has become very famous and very common in wedding parties and many festive occasions.

Costume for the men: Long dress in dark color, like a black coat and a white turban on the head to protect them while they are under the sun.

Costume for the women: Long dress that covers all of the body, long headscarf to cover all of the hair and a big necklace called “kerdan”, usually in gold color.

Originally saidi women did not dance because it was forbidden in their own culture, but Mahmoud Reda, the founding father of modern Egyptian folkdance, created the female saidi dance version for theater, sharing the stage with the men.

The instruments played for saidi dance are Mizmar, rebaba, nay (flute) and tabla.

Saidi dance is considered the most important Egyptian folklore dance.

### 2) Mosaic Oriental Suite: The IU Middle Eastern Dance Club

Katya's Student dancers: Katie 1, Katie 2, Elizabeth, Storm; director and choreographer, Katya Faris

\*This suite is presented in three songs to showcase how women can dance together in the Raqs Sharqi (Oriental Dance) style.

#### a) “Albi Lik Mayyal”: Group Oriental style-

Choreography by Katya Faris

“Raqs Sharqi”, or “Oriental Dance”, means “Dance of the East”, and in this case it means East of Cairo, not East of Europe. Oriental dance came to Cairo with the various peoples that have touched the Egyptian heritage, but especially with the influences of Lebanon, the Silk Road and the Romani Gypsy Trail. Because of these influences, Oriental dance in Egypt looks very different than the native regional folkdances. Oriental dance is a women's solo improvised dance that originated in the royal courts of Baghdad during the 1500's and then came to Lebanon, and then to

Egypt. The song Albi Lik Mayyal means, “My Heart Adores You”, and was made popular by singer Samira Ahmed.

b) **“Lamma Bada Yatathanna”: Classical Arabic Song-**

Choreography by Katya Faris

This is a Semaii tune in the rhythm of 10/8. Semaii is a style of song that is in four parts with the third part having a faster tempo, and the fourth part matching the first. This particular song comes from Andalusia in Spain during the 7th century. The ruling Umayyad family were dethroned by another Saudi tribe called the Abbacies in the late 7th century. The Umayyad fled from Damascus, Syria to Granada, Spain, and established themselves in the royal court, the Al Hambra, where they hired Turkish musicians and dancers. According to Faten Munger, who has done research in Spain over the past 30 years, many think this is a Moorish song, but that is incorrect; the Moors came later in 711 A.D. Katya has fused Turkish/Azerbaijani movement with Arabic to create a fusion dance with candles. Lamma Bada Yat Thana means, “The beautiful one with the swinging gait”, and is written about the Sultan looking out into the garden and gazing at a beautiful young lady dancing gracefully, and his longing for her.

c) **Drum Solo:**

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

This particular solo tabla piece showcases Latin and Arabic rhythms with movement from both genres, creating yet another way that women can dance together! Drum solos are the drummer’s opportunity to display his virtuosity without the band, and also interact with the dancer in a more intimate way. A typical drum solo will show the drummer playing a rhythm measure four times; the first measure cues the dancers as to what he is doing, the second measure gets her into it, the third allows her to really display what she can do with it, and by the fourth the drummer and dancer should act as one. Many different rhythms can be used in a drum solo, or just a few.

3) **Khaleeji and Raqs Sharqi, "Rahib"- Alexandria**

Improvisation

The women’s improvised dance of the Gulf region, i.e. Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., and Kuwait, is called “khalidge” (pronounced, “khaleeji”). Typical movements involve the use of the head in swinging the hair, and a soft lyrical quality to the dance. The traditional dress is called the “thob” and consists of a large dress with open sleeves, which the dancer uses in her dance. The second half of this dance is Modern Raqs Sharki in Alexandria’s own unique and inspiring style.

4) **Group Spanish/Arab Fusion, "Amayaguena”**- Kim, Stacy, Zoe, Brenda

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

Composed by Ibrahim El-Samahy, this is a playful conversation in dance between gypsies and aristocrats learning to live together in harmony. The dance fuses both Spanish Flamenco and Arabic dance movements together.

5) **Modern Egyptian Pop, “Habibi”**: Katie

Choreography by Katya Faris and Katie

Just as the music is a blend of Western and Eastern sensibilities, this dance showcases how modern and jazz can be added elements to traditional Raqs Sharqi movement to create an exciting new kind of dance.

6) **Cuban Mambo Duet, "Cao Cao Mani Picao"**: Storm and Felipe

Choreography by Storm and Felipe

This is a song made famous by singer, Celia Cruz, "La Reina de Salsa". Although this is a mambo song and can be used for Latin dance-sport, which is much like ballroom dance, Storm and Felipe have decided to show us how "real Latinos" dance to this song. This is the style one would see at a street dance in Mexico City, which is much more like dancing salsa.

7) **Modern Lebanese Raqs Sharqi, "Tales of the Sahara" and "Solo Tabla"**:

Katya Faris

Improvisation

This is Katya's version of translating modern Lebanese movement into her own style mixed with Classical Egyptian dance. The solo tabla is a drum solo made famous by Egyptian dancer, Mona Said.

9) **Classic Egyptian Raqs Sharqi, "Dreams"**:

Storm

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger and Katya Faris

The piece of music is called, "Dreams", or "Ahlam", in Arabic; the composer is Faruk Salama. Classical Egyptian music borrows a lot of Western musical sensibility, and so it is appropriate for the dance to incorporate ballet to reflect that influence. This piece of music was handed to Faten by Salama in 1978 when she moved to the US, and it is the first choreography that Katya Faris learned from her.

10) **Spanish shawl, "Bayafy"**: Stacy Kaper

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

This is a Turkish/Russian fusion song from Uzbekistan danced in the Flamenco shawl dance style.

11) **Modern Egyptian Ghawazee, "El Ataba Gazaz"**: Zoe Molloy

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

This is a traditional Ghawazee folk song from Egypt done in a modern style. The Ghawazee are the "Gypsies" of Egypt, meaning that their ancestors came from the Indus Valley in India and Pakistan. They traveled the "Gypsy Trail", and settled in Egypt and became popular entertainers.

12) **Flamenco, "Sevillianas"**: Brenda Perkins & Stacy Kaper

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

This is a very common dance in Flamenco done with castanettes, and is one of the first pieces that new students learn.



13) **Modern Egyptian Baladi:** Ishara Gamal

Improvisation

This is a song called “Taht Til Shebek” that was made popular by singer, Fatme Serhan and dancer, Dina of Cairo; Dina is acknowledged to be on the top dancers in Egypt today and it is considered one of Dina’s signature songs. Baladi means “country” in Arabic, and in this case it refers to a certain style of dance from Cairo that is the women’s solo improvised dance that is passed from mother to daughter. This music is a modern version of this style, so the dancing has modern elements of Raqs Sharki and ballet.

14) **Modern Arabic/Latin Fusion Pop, "Korbak Naar":**

Kim Melluck, Stacy Kaper, Zoe Molloy

Choreography by Faten Ali Munger

This is a song by singer Ragheb Allamah of Egypt, and loosely translates as “You being beside me is like fire”. This dance is done with zils, or finger cymbals, and fuses Latin and Arabic dance movements.

15) **Egyptian Folkloric Suite-** The IU Middle Eastern Dance Club

Katya’s Student dancers: Katie Hatch, Katie Derloshon, Elizabeth Johnson, Storm Velazquez; director and choreographer, Katya Faris

a) **Solo Baladi Taqsim w/cane, “Yarab Tobah”:** Katya Faris

A taqsim in Arabic music is the improvisational part of the music; the object is to start in one maqam, or Arabic scale, and modulate up to another maqam, and then come back down. This Baladi style taqsim increases in tempo, unlike its Classical counterpart. “Yarab Tobah” loosely translates as “Forgive Me, God”, and is usually played late at night at weddings and celebrations when the musicians are really into their music, and the crowd is yearning for a passionate song.

b) Group Cane Dance, “Bela3araby”: This is a song by Mohamed Kamal of Egypt, and the general meaning of the song is “Don’t play with me! How dare you treat me that way?!” The piece is a playful interaction between women who are competing for attention dancing with their canes and showing off.

16) **Egyptian Whirling Dervish, “Tanura”:** Mohamed Shahin

Improvisation

This is a fascinating and intoxicating dance that was brought to Egypt by the Turks; it is a Sufi dance that is done solo for entertainment purposes only. The Sufis are the mystics of Islam, and the particular order that created the original whirling dance is called the “Mevlevi”, which was founded by Jelalludin Mevlana Rumi, a mystical poet and scholar from Konya, Turkey. The object of the dance is to lift the veils of illusion in order to reach Allah, and the dancer does this by symbolically lifting off one skirt at a time. At one point you will see the “lantern” shape in his skirts, and this symbolizes the “Light”.

17) **Concert Finale:** Everyone

## II. Mosaic II

We are pleased to present “Mosaic II: A Tapestry of Middle Eastern Dances”! This is Katya Faris’s Practicum for her Master’s in Ethnomusicology at Indiana University. She has gathered together some of the finest dancers in Indiana to perform the choreographies of her coach, Mohamed Shahin, of Cairo, Egypt, as well as those of her first Egyptian teacher, Faten Ali Munger, and herself. While most of the Arabic dances tonight are from Egypt, there are a few exceptions, such as Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Also, choreographies will be juxtaposed against improvised pieces so that the full picture of Arabic dance can be viewed, as Egyptian dance is traditionally improvised. The staging of Egyptian dance began in the 1950’s when Mahmoud Reda began the now legendary Reda Troupe. He took folkdances from the various regions of Egypt, and added Western ideas of choreography and theatricality; his inspiration came from ballet, and from watching Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Mohamed Shahin is one of many dancers who began dancing professionally in the Reda Troupe before branching out on his own. This foundation in the marriage of European dance and music forms to traditional Egyptian folk dance and music has given birth to a new Modern Egyptian style. In Egypt, what Americans call “bellydance” is folkdance, “Raqs Sharqi”; therefore, “Raqs Sharqi” (Dance of the East) is included in the pantheon of regional folkdances. However, it is not taught in the folkdance schools, such as El Kowmaia, as it is normally handed down from mother to daughter. The most refined version of this dance can be seen at 5 star hotels in Cairo, Dubai, Beirut, Amman, and Istanbul; Raqs Sharqi is done to the most classical of Arabic music.

Set One:

1) **Saidi Double Tahtib and Cane Dance:** Mohamed; Ana, Ashley, Alexandra  
Choreography by Mohamed Shahin

SAIDI

The Saidi area lies in the South of Egypt and is comprised of four big cities:

Qina

Luxor

Asyut

Suhaj

The very famous dance called the “Saidi stick dance” (Raks Al sayya) originated in this area, as well. Tahtib means a kind of dance but it is also a game between two men in which each of them holds a big bamboo stick to show their power and prowess; at the end one of them wins.

The ‘stick’ is also practiced as a pastime and used as a means of self-defense.

Through the history of dance, this particular dance has become very famous and very common in wedding parties and many festive occasions.

Costume for the men: Long dress in dark color, like a black coat and a white turban on the head to protect them while they are under the sun.

Costume for the women: Long dress that covers all of the body, long headscarf to cover all of the hair and a big necklace called “kerdan”, usually in gold color.

Originally saidi women did not dance because it was forbidden in their own culture, but Mahmoud Reda created the female saidi dance version for theater, sharing the stage with the men.

The instruments played for saidi dance are Mizmar, rebaba, nay (flute) and tabla. Saidi dance is considered the most important Egyptian folklore dance.

2) **Khaleeji:** Katya-

Improvisational choreography by Katya

The women's improvised dance of the Gulf region, i.e. Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., and Kuwait, is called "khalidge" (pronounced, "khaleeji"). Typical movements involve the use of the head in swinging the hair, and a soft lyrical quality to the dance. The traditional dancing dress is called a "khaleeji dress" and consists of a large dress with open sleeves, which the dancer uses in her dance.

3) **Modern Oriental Duet:** Ashley and Alexandra

"Pharonic Odyssey", choreography by Ashley

This is a modern Oriental piece celebrating the strength of the feminine spirit. The style of this piece is American Cabaret with an Egyptian flair. This is Ashley's choreographic debut with Bellydance.

4) **Raqs Sharqi Solo:** Camila

Improvisation

"Alf Laila Wa Laila", composed for Umm Kulthum

This song means "1001 Nights" in Arabic, and is the famous tale of Scheherazade. Umm Kulthum is Egypt's most beloved singer. She was known to have taken one verse of a song and sing it 54 different ways in one performance. She was a pioneering woman, and changed the face of music in Egypt forever. Her legendary status extends to the dance arrangements of her songs, and all dancers feel nostalgic about her music. Her songs were really classical poetry, but set to music. Here is part of the lyrics that go to this song in Arabic, and then in English from [www.shira.net](http://www.shira.net):

**Alf Layla Wa Layla**

(*Ya Habeebi, Ya Habeebi, Yaaa Habeebi.*) My sweetheart, my sweetheart, my sweetheart.

(*Illeil wi samah, wi ingomo iw amaro, amaro wi saharo.*) The night and its sky, its stars, its moon, moon and keeping awake all night.

(*Winta wana, ya habeebi ana, ya hayati ana.*) You and me my sweetheart, my life. Ya (*Habeebi, Ya Habeebi, Yaaa Habeebi.*) My sweetheart, my sweetheart, my sweetheart.

(*Illeil wi samah, wi ingomo iw amaro, amaro wi saharo.*) The night and its sky, its stars, its moon, moon and keeping awake all night.

(*Winta wana, ya habeebi ana, ya hayati ana.*) You and me my sweetheart, my life.

(*Kollina, Kollina fi ilhobi sawa.*) All of us together are the same in love.

(*Wilhawa, ah minno ilhawa. Ilhawa, ah minno Ilhawa, ah minno Ilhawa, aaah minno Ilhawa.*) And love, aah from the love, aah from love, aah from love, aah from love.

(*Sahran Ilhawa yis-eena Ilhana weyool Bilhana. Wilhawa.*) The love is awake all night long giving us a drink of happiness and telling us in good happiness.

(*Ah Minno Ilhawa. Wilhawa. Ah Minno Ilhawa. Ah Minno Ilhawa, Aaah Minno Ilhawa.*) And the love. Love, Oh from love, Oh from love, Oh from love.

(*Sahran Ilhawa yis-eena Ilhana weyool Bilhana.*) The love is awake all night long giving us a drink of happiness and telling us in good happiness.

(*Ya Habeebi.*) My sweetheart.

5) **Modern Egyptian Raqs Sharqi Solo:** Alexandra

“Nabila”, composed by Mohamed Sultan; choreographed by Katya Faris and Alexandra

“Nabila” means “noble” in Arabic, and this song portrays a modern Raqs Sharqi composition with its fast tempo and Saidi flair. This is Alexandra’s first Egyptian Raqs Sharki solo and stage debut in Bloomington, Indiana.

6) **Iskanderani/Melaya Leff:** Mohamed and Katya

“Banat Bahari”, choreography by Mohamed Shahin

The song title in Arabic means “Sisters of the Sea”, and “Iskanderani” means, “Alexandria”, which is where this dance originates. The city is in the north of Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea, and because of its seafaring history, has had contact with the Greeks, who left a large impression on the city with its many amphitheatres. As a result, theatre has been a part of the city’s heritage. The women are known for their graceful and elegant style, and the men are vigorous as they represent the fisherman. The “melaya” is the veil covering that women use to conceal themselves in public, and is the hallmark of the women’s version of this dance.

7) **Raqs Sharqi Solo, Ana Lucia –**

Improvisation

“Fadwa”, Classical Egyptian

Choreography by Lulu Sabongi of Brazil

\*Intermission: 15-20 mins.

**Set Two:**

8) **Raqs Sharqi, Drum Solo, Ashley-**

“Nashwat Al Raqs”, choreography by Faten Ali Munger and Katya Faris

“Drum Solo”, choreography by Faten Ali Munger

The song title means “Dance of Intoxication”, and is a Lebanese-style Raqs Sharqi composition. This is the second solo that Faten put on Katya, and now Katya is pleased to pass it down to her dancing daughter, Ashley. The drum solo is a piece that Ashley learned from Faten in 2004, and combines Latin and Arabic rhythms.

9) **Drum Solo Duet/Arabic/Brazilian Samba Fusion: Ana and Camila**

Choreography by Ana Lucia

10) **Raqs Sharqi Solo, Drum Solo, Finale, Katya-**

“Raqs Bedeya”, choreography by Mohamed Shahin and Katya Faris

“Drum Solo”, improvisational choreography by Katya Faris

This is a pure classical Egyptian Raqs Sharqi composition written in the style of famous dancer, Badia (“Bedeya in Egyptian dialect) Massabni. Badia was Lebanese, but moved to Cairo when she married an Egyptian, Najib Mahfouz. She was the owner of the Cairo Casino Opera club in the 1930's-'50's, and is the grandmother of the modern Raqs Sharqi style of today, which combines ballet with Egyptian dance. She also created the performance format that we employ today, similar to an opera where a story is being told, and there are different combinations of dancers in each piece. Badia trained all of the legendary dancers of her day who later went on to become famous Egyptian film stars: Samia Gamal, Tahiyya Carioca, and Naima Akef, to name just a few. Katya learned the choreography from Mohamed in 2007, and this showcases Mohamed's modern approach to Classical Egyptian dance. The drum solo is an improvisation by Katya with “sagat, or “finger cymbals”.

11) **El Shaabi Group Dance, Ashley, Alexandra, Camila-**

“El Shaabi” means “the people” in Arabic, and indeed, this music comes from the streets of Cairo where many different peoples from various regions of Egypt converge. In the West we know this as “pop” music, and this particular song is a fusion of folkloric styles of Egyptian music mixed with a Western musical sensibility.

12) **Tanura, Mohamed-**

Improvisation

This is a fascinating and intoxicating dance that was brought to Egypt by the Turks; it is a Sufi dance that is done solo for entertainment purposes only. The Sufis are the mystics of Islam, and the particular order that created the original whirling dance is called the “Mevlevi”, which was founded by Jelalludin Mevlana Rumi, a mystical poet and scholar from Konya, Turkey. The object of the dance is to lift the veils of illusion in order to reach Allah, and the dancer does this by symbolically lifting off one skirt at a time. At one point you will see the “lantern” shape in his skirts, and this symbolizes the “Light”.

13) **Finale-Everyone**

We hope that you have enjoyed our show! Thanks for supporting Middle Eastern Dance and Ethnomusicology!

**III. Mosaic III**

We are pleased to present “Mosaic III: A Tapestry of Middle Eastern Dances”! This is Katya Faris’s third Mosaic dance concert, and this time she has enlisted the help of some of the best of Bloomington’s bellydancers to produce the best concert yet! This new alliance is called the Bloomington Bellydance Coalition, and includes Ashley, Alexandra, Katie, Angie, and Megan. Special guest artist Karim Nagi is joining us tonight to explore a variety of Egyptian rhythms on tabla (goblet shaped drum), riqq (tambourine with cymbals), and sagat, or “finger cymbals”. Karim’s artistic inspiration stems from Egypt, but he has taken it a step further in what he calls “re-inventing tradition” to create his own unique form of modern percussive music. While most of the Arabic dances tonight are from traditional Egypt, there are a few exceptions, such as American Tribal and Egyptian Contemporary, as well as Mr. Nagi’s own inspired solo. Also, choreographies will be juxtaposed against improvised pieces so that the full picture of Arabic dance can be viewed, as Egyptian dance is traditionally improvised. The staging of Egyptian dance began in the 1950’s when Mahmoud Reda began the now legendary Reda Troupe. He took folkdances from the various regions of Egypt, and added Western ideas of choreography and theatricality; his inspiration came from ballet, and from watching Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. This foundation in the marriage of European dance and music forms to traditional Egyptian folk dance and music has given birth to a new Modern Egyptian style. Karim Nagi’s music has as a base this traditional style, but with a modern flair that sets him apart from most Arabic percussionists. In Egypt, what Americans call “bellydance” is folkdance, “Raqs Sharqi”; therefore, “Raqs Sharqi” (Dance of the East) is included in the pantheon of regional folkdances. However, it is not taught in the folkdance schools, such as El Kowmaia, as it is normally handed down from mother to daughter. The most refined version of this dance can be seen at 5 star hotels in Cairo, Dubai, Beirut, Amman, and Istanbul; Raqs Sharqi is done to the most classical of Arabic music.

Arabic dance whether modern or traditional encourages audience interaction, so if you like what you see, feel free to clap along, yell encouragement by saying “Yallah!”, or “Aiwa!”, or try a “zaghareet”, or Arabic ululation! If you’re new to this, follow the lead of those in the audience with experience and join in! We hope you enjoy our show, and if you’d like to study with Karim, don’t forget that his workshops are taking place here at the Waldron tomorrow afternoon! Please visit Katya’s website for more information: [www.katyafaris.com](http://www.katyafaris.com)

**Set One:**

1) **“Ahlan Wa Sahalan!”, Group Drum Solo w/Karim-** Ashley, Alexandra, Katie, Megan, Angie-

Karim Nagi opens the show with a group piece displaying a variety of Arabic rhythms to which the dancers will improvise. Ahlan Wa Sahalan! Welcome!

2) **Balady Taqsim w/cane:** Katya

Katya is performing to the modern Egyptian song, “Shik Shak Shok”. This style is Balady taqsim from Cairo; it is an improvisational folkloric dance that she is dancing with cane tonight.

3) **“Zar El Farrah”-Classic Lebanese-Megan**

This piece is from a CD of music from famed Lebanese dancer Nadia Gamal, an icon of Bellydance in the 1960's. This choreography is from Lebanese-American dancer Ibrahim “Bobby” Farrah, and incorporates zar trance movements for a theatricalized representation of this style. It was taught to Megan from Ruby Jazayre of South Bend, Indiana, a student of Bobby's.

4) **Egyptian Contemporary Trio- Alex, Ashley, Katie**

This Egyptian Contemporary piece was created in collaboration by all three dancers with Ashley as the executive choreographer. The first piece employs music from Natasha Atlas, an Arabic techno-fusion singer from London who is renowned for her modern style. The second piece is a song from famous Egyptian singer, Warda, “Batwannes Beek”, which means, “You're Always with Me”. This dance portrays the versatility of the Egyptian style fused with Modern and Jazz dance in a whimsical and fun way showcasing three friends enjoying each other's company.

5) **American Tribal - Angie**

American Tribal style Bellydance has become a fixed member in the pantheon of urban folkdances of the post-modern era. Angie tonight is showing two styles of this dance: ATS, or traditional American Tribal Style created by Carolina Nericcio, and Tribal Fusion, a modern reinterpretation of ATS with sword. Angie will be dancing to the music, “Derwood Green” by Hossam Ramzy and Phil Thornton .

6) **Egyptian Raqs Sharqi/Spanish Fusion with Fan- Alexandra**

Mohamed Abdel Wahab is considered the most important composer of Egyptian Classical music today. This song, “Ya Msafer Whadek”, is a perfect example of how Abdel Wahab fused traditional Egyptian style with other forms of music. In this song it is Spanish Flamenco music that he used to create a unique style of Modern Egyptian composition. He was controversial in the 1950's for his efforts, but today his music is considered “classical”!

7) **Egyptian Raqs Sharqi with veil- Ashley**

This piece of music is called “Layali Al Sharq”, which means “Eastern Night”, and is a modern composition of traditional Egyptian Raqs Sharqi music. Ashley's style also reflects a reinterpretation of classical Egyptian dance by adding ballet and jazz to her dance.

**Set 2:**

1) **Egyptian Raqs Sharqi with Saidi cane – Alexandra**

Egyptian composer Mohamed Ali has created this Raqs Sharqi piece, “Princesah”, for the younger dancer in mind. This piece also has a short Saidi section, which is a traditional folkloric style dance with cane. Alexandra is affectionately known to Katya as “Hummingbird Princess” for her youthful high energy, and so she thought this song was fitting for her style of dance!

2) **Egyptian Raqs Sharqi /Drum Solo with Karim-Katya**

This song was created by Mohamed Ali with the experienced dancer in mind and is called “El Malika” or “The Queen” in Arabic. Alexandra’s nickname for Katya is “Queen”, and thus fitting for her to dance!

The second song Katya will perform to tonight will be “El Atlal”, which means “The Ruins”, in Arabic. The song was written for legendary songstress diva Umm Kulthum of Egypt; it is a song typical of many classical love themes of lost love and heartbreak, thus the title “ruins”, implying the ruins with which a broken heart is left. Ending her set, Katya will dance an improvisational tabla solo with Karim Nagi. Enjoy!

3) **Egypt Re-imagined: Karim Nagi**

Karim Nagi has become a force to be reckoned with in the Arabic music scene for his vigorous and inspired performances of music he has created himself and performed while dancing in his own unique style.

4) **Finale-**

IV. **Mosaic IV**

**Set 1**

1) **Bloomington Bellydance Coalition: Katya, Ashley, Katie, Lindsay**

Egyptian Saidi Group Piece, traditional

Solo Improvisation by Katya Faris, and

Group Choreography by Mohamed Shahin

2) **Laila Aziz**

**Turkish Romany “Gypsy”**

improvisation

3) **Bloomington Bellydance Coalition: Ashley, Katie, Lindsay**



Khaleegi Group Piece, "Al Shaqi"

Choreography by Mohamed Shahin

4) **Leila Gamal**

**Classical Egyptian Oriental Set-"Amber Oriental/Khamis Henkesh Drum Solo"**

improvisation

5) **Ashley**

**Modern Egyptian Oriental Umm Kulthum-"Ansaak"**

Choreography by Mohamed Shahin

6) **Katya Faris**

**"Layali Zaman"-Lebanese Oriental Set w/fanveils**

Improvisation

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### **Credits:**

Videography: Bloomington CATS TV for Mosaic I, III, and IV; Lightbay Photography Studio, Chicago for Mosaic II

Youtube clips editing: Katya Faris

Photography: Tom Stio, Michael Wensler

### **Youtube Links:**

Mosaic I Playlist: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFZszXz9bwYyWO-y38Eq4ieXCnyBRprqO> (accessed, 12-19-12).

Mosaic II Playlist: [http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFZszXz9bwYxuBk-H\\_8J2c1Mkm3\\_QvL0o](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFZszXz9bwYxuBk-H_8J2c1Mkm3_QvL0o) (accessed, 12-19-12).

Mosaic III Playlist: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFZszXz9bwYy64GSybDCIFT6-V1wfd6KM> (accessed, 12-19-12).

Mosaic IV Playlist: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB1226E15BA1DF41E> (accessed, 12-19-12).