Soul Dance Newsletter

Volume 5 – September 2010

AHLAN WA SAHLAN

Welcome to our last newsletter of the year. We all say how quickly the years are going by these days but when I look back over the year certain events seem like decades ago!

We have opened and settled into our new studio, we have hosted Michelle Joyce, we have welcomed brand new students to the school, established the Gothic troupe, some of us have been to Egypt, and all of us have learned new dances and shared many wonderful times together as classmates and friends. Yes we have had a full year!

Next year I will be throwing my weight behind creating more opportunities for 'extra-curricular' activities. We have a wonderful space at the studio and I would like to make the most of it! Expect things like Trivia Nights, Harem Nights, Video Nights, Second-Hand Sales, Costume and Make-Up lessons, Dance Workshops and additional special-interest classes!

For those heading up to the Woodford Folk Festival after Christmas, I am performing with the Middle Eastern band, "Muziz" with Tamara Taylor and Ayelet Ashkar on the night of the 27th. Come say hi!

I would like to thank my fellow teachers, Mell, Deborah, Helen, Sonya, Jayde and Jewels of Arabia leader extraordinaire, Marilyn, for their support, hard work and inspiration throughout the year.

And I would like to thank each of you, the students, for aiming for the stars – you are the ones who put the "soul" into Soul Dance.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year season – hope you have some happy times with friends and or family and we will see you refreshed and ready for another great year in dance!

Margaret's Mobile Meanderings…..

I have a special request to make of the gorgeous divas of Soul Dance.

I was thinking about how to get my phone bill down a bit and, since the largest part of my bill is due to text messages (I get heaps from students), I was wondering if we could try this idea:

If you would like to ask me a dance question that does not require an immediate response, text me and I will reply by email within 48 hours. An example of this kind of text would be: "Will we be wearing anything in our hair for the performance next week?" or "What is the date of the Extravaganza this year?"

If you need to ask me something that requires an immediate response or a response within 24 hours, **please ring me** – I promise not to keep you chatting on the phone! An example of this would be: "What time is class tonight?", "Help! I'm lost! Is the hafla in the hall or the old church building?"

Of course, if you are just communicating with me as a friend, eg "Just bought sassy red shoes on sale!!!" then go ahead – that's cool!!! I am just looking to reduce the quantity of messages that I have to reply to, not eliminate them altogether!! Thanks heaps for your understanding ladies (and gents!)
Margaret x

Helen's Travels

I have been scrambling on the net trying to come up with some articles for Soul Dance's last newsletter for 2010. My eyes were growing weary and my head was spinning….as it does when lost in cyberspace and I decided to write about travel instead.

Those Soul Dancers and drummers out there that have been lucky enough to travel on one of the Soul of Egypt tours will know how life is never the same after such an adventure. The Egypt experience is one that can be an "assault on the senses" and the reality is you can either love it or hate it. From my travels the majority of people find the heart-warming hospitality, manic traffic and extraordinary sights/sites something they will never forget. A whole family riding helmetless on a 250cc motorbike through Cairo streets can be just as gob-smacking as the Pyramids!!

My first trip in 2007 with the dance school was 2 years in the planning and made possible by determination, fierce budgeting and the smallest hint of revenge. My husband Steven had enjoyed one too many overseas rugby jaunts before I realized that it was definitely my turn to travel!! My "Once in a Lifetime" 2007 journey has been the beginning of what I hope will be a long connection with a truly intriguing part of the world… "Inshallah". If you have always dreamt of seeing Egypt then think seriously about planning a trip. On our dance school tours I have enjoyed the company of mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, husbands, wives, partners, friends and also solo travelers, dancers and non-dancers. There really is something for everyone in the itinerary.

If anyone wants a chat about the tour I am sure Margaret or I would be happy to sit down with you over some mint tea and a sheesha pipe and convince you to take the plunge!!

Helen x

Photo: Victoria Hotel, Cairo 2007 Photographer: The lovely Diana

Do They Celebrate Christmas in Egypt?

Most Egyptians today are Muslims therefore they do not celebrate christmas as such although they do commemorate the birth of Jesus, but they celebrate the festivals Eid - ul - Fitr and Eid - Ul - Adha.

However, Egypt's Christian Copts celebrate Christmas on the 7th of January. The preceding Advent is for 40 days when the Copts should abstain from eating meat, poultry and dairy products. However, nowadays, people only really do this during the last week of Advent.

On Christmas Eve, Egypt's Coptic Christians go to church wearing new clothes and Mass goes on until midnight. Bells are rung to mark the end of the service and people go home after they receive the special bread called 'qurban' (meaning sacrifice) at the end of the service. This bread has a Holy Cross in the middle and 12 dots to represent the 12 apostles.

Then they eat a special Christmas meal at home called 'Fata'. This meal uses bread, rice, garlic and boiled meat as its main constituents. In the morning, people visit their friends and neighbors and exchange 'kaik' (a type of shortbread) that is eaten with a drink called 'shortbat'.

Christmas is celebrated as a public holiday, especially for the Christians. Since Christians believe that Jesus, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt for fear of Herod's plan, the Coptic churches are decorated with candles and lamps on Christmas to remind the Coptic Christians of when Joseph lit candles to keep Mary warm during the birth of Jesus.

In Egypt traditions are influenced by regional culture throughout Egypt so there are some differences depending on location.

Read more: http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_does_Egypt_celebrate_Christmas#ixzz16qHWjFTf

MONDAY NIGHT WHISPERINGS

by Helen

As I write this I am still basking in Hafla afterglow! As a dance school we should be so very proud of putting forward such enjoyable and professional performances. A big thank you to everyone who has supported Soul Dance dancers and drummers throughout the year. The co-operation and flexibility of our families and friends make our ongoing involvement with Soul Dance possible.

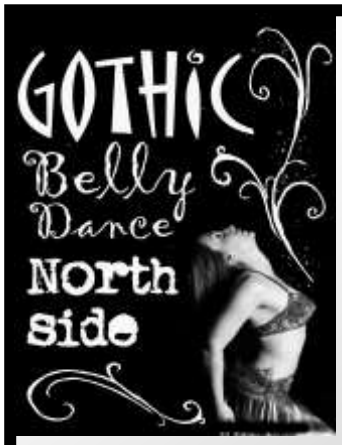
Amidst the fast pace of our lives we encounter all sorts of obstacles that can keep us from having "me" time. In the Monday night classes we have had the excitement of births (Congratulations Karryn on becoming a Grandmother of twins), the happiness of a wedding (Congratulations Katie & Grant who married in September) and also the sadness of job redundancy, serious illness and death. Just remember that the bad days have a habit of being not so bad after you have taken the time to breathe….laugh…..and DANCE.

Thank you lovely ladies for your loyalty and enthusiasm in 2010. I look forward to sharing dance plans for 2011 and lunch with you at "Gypsys' Table" in Maleny on Jan 9th.

Any other Soul Dancers who would like to join us to talk bellydance, Abbey Medieval or travel dreams on that day please email me at hamptonz@bigpond.net.au and I will include you in our booking.

May your Christmas and New Year be full of fun & laughter leaving you refreshed and recharged for 2011.

Helen x



Our Gothic troupe was both excited and a little panicked to be presenting their two choreographies back to back at the hafla this year. We really hope you are enjoying what we are coming up with. As the lyrics in our latest dance say, "Do ya like what ya see?"

It's a learning curve for all of us as we "feel" our way through the darkness. Most of us in the group are struggling with the concept of 'not smiling' on stage.

We have to work very hard to stay faithful to the feelings being conveyed by the lyrics. As Australians, when we dance to Arabic music we don't know what the lyrics are saying a lot of the time so it's an element of the dance we don't deal with as a norm. We are all enjoying this added connection to the music and finding it greatly challenging.

Margaret x

DID YOU KNOW?.....

A lineage of women called the Awalim (sing, Almeh) are known today as prostitutes and dancers, but were once highly respected in society for their expertise in all the arts including poetry, literature, dancing, music and the art of making love. It was their occupation to teach these arts. In the Middle East today and abroad in Arab communities, it is customary to perform the Wedding Procession or Zaffah at all weddings.

The Rakiseh or Belly Dancer leads the wedding procession from the church or mosque to the reception party. Along the way, she encourages the couple to perform hip movements and to occasionally kiss. Whether the family is Christian or Muslim, this tradition is so strong that many mothers feel if the Bellydancer is not present at the wedding, the couple may not produce babies and wealth. In small villages, still today, the Belly Dancer leads the newlyweds to the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage rather than taking them to the banquet hall. The rhythm for the wedding march or the Zaffah cannot be found in other Arabic music. At one time this Belly Dancer would have been the temple priestess or perhaps even an Almeh.

After overcoming the stigma attached to this dance, all women love to Bellydance. It is an expression of a woman enjoying her femininity, sensuality and the power that the female body has an embodiment of reproduction. A leading Belly Dancer in the Middle East performs for an hour and a-half to two hours straight, accompanied by her own 50 piece orchestra. The show, which can be performed up to three times every evening, is all about her personality, beauty and agility. It is about one woman's glorification of the fact that she is female.

The dance is for women of all ages, and in its natural form is performed by women for women. Behind closed doors, women from 3 to 103 strut their stuff for everyone's appreciation.

Once while performing at a large Syrian/Armenian family gathering, that was a 50th wedding Anniversary, I was brought to tears. Often the Zaffah is performed at anniversaries as well as weddings, so in the middle of my performance, I went over to the couple to pull them up to dance. As I was approaching, the crowd stopped me with a big "NO" because the wife could not walk, so I was not to embarrass her. But before I could return to the dance floor, she grabbed my arm with a strength to be reckoned with. She then firmly placed one hand on the table and used the strength in both arms to help herself rise. Everyone around protested. She gave them a scolding and got herself almost to a standing position. Using all her strength to support herself on the table and my arm, she proceeded to sway her hips from side to side, while beaming a huge smile at me. The room was silent until she sat down, then roared with appreciation as she looked proudly into her husband's wide and bedazzled eyes.

The reasons students take up the dance are varied and there is no "typical type" of woman. They come from all walks of life. These women persist because Belly Dancing enhances self-esteem. Often one will tell how she found the courage to stand up to a boss, an abusive husband or equally difficult situations. Eating disorders have been alleviated, entrepreneurs born, and all have experienced a new awareness of comfort with their bodies regardless of shape and size. Coincidence? Maybe … but these women will tell you it is because of Belly Dancing.

Bellydancing is a perfect vehicle for opening a new door on how to view the female body, what can be expressed through it and the power that real feminine sensuality holds.

© Yasmina Ramzy, Arabesque Academy and Company

The Abbey Medieval Faire 2011

Now is the time to start thinking about if you would like to join our Medieval Gypsy Troupe, Shuvani. The festival is in July and the first part of the year sees us creating and improving our costumes, learning some new dances and revising old ones. Don't forget that if you want to come see what it's all about without the hassle of making a costume or learning new dances you can simple borrow a costume so you can "try before you buy" so to speak.

For existing Shuvani members, there will be many changes afoot in 2011. We will be trialling a few new ways of doing things. If you have had any ideas over the years, now might be the time to bight the bullet and try them out – have a chat to your teacher to sound them out!

Deborah

It is with a thankful heart that I wish to acknowledge Soul Dance teacher, Deborah, who has for many years, lead the Brighton class, Tior Albah. She has decided to hand over the leadership role to Jayde. Deborah has been a constantly committed student and supporter of Soul Dance since the school started.

She clearly could not contain the joy she felt to be bellydancing and so felt compelled to spread it around by creating Tior Albah. It was Deborah's pure and simple love of the dance and dedication that made her a perfect Soul Dance teacher. Her students will miss her leadership very much, but Tior Albah is such a tight-knit group of ladies, that they will no doubt throw their support behind Jayde and prepare themselves for their next adventures!

On behalf of everyone at Soul Dance, thank you Deborah for being an integral part of Soul Dance all these years and helping to make the school what it is today. Thank you also for your original and fun choreographies that have thrilled us over the years at our haflas. Most of all thank you for spreading the joy of bellydance to so many women whose lives have been changed or immeasurably enhanced for having known you. You are an inspiration.

Adult / Beginners Ballet Class

Michelle Laurenson

This year has seen me return to my one true passion in life – dancing. At the insistence of a good friend and the opportunity presented by another, I found myself at Souldance in April. I haven't looked back since, and it has reminded me how much I love other, more classical forms of dance as well.

After trying to find a ballet class that suited, I found myself with a sour taste in my mouth – after the kind welcoming students and teachers of Souldance and the middle eastern dancing community, I could no longer tolerate the leotard-wearing presumptuous adult ballerinas I was presented with. I conceded that perhaps my time as a student has passed, and it was now my turn to pass on the knowledge I have accumulated from some seventeen years or so of classical training.

As a result, in the new year, I will be starting an Adult/Beginners Ballet class. It will be based in classical (French) ballet but where possible, using a bit more modern music. There will also be no need for buns and leotards! It will be like a regular Souldance beginners class – 8 week initial course, on Wednesday 6:30-7:30. If you are interested and would like more information, please email me at: bella_demonia@hotmail.com

TIOR ALBAH

Well here we are at the end of another year. So much has been on this year the diary was groaning at times.

With the warmer days ahead it's nice to just run over the dances you have learnt without too much work for the memory. Arms arm's, no head , jeez what's the next bit--- Once that main event is over where you present it for the first time, you get to really enjoy doing it!! You can however catch yourself doing bits of a dance in the oddest of places ---like woollies!! or the car. Well it's their fault for playing it.

The ladies of Tior Albah have excelled all my expectations. They continue to learn, have forged some very strong ties with each other, and have kept the true spirit of Soul Dance. They dance together for lots of different reasons but dance as a group to support one another. It's a beautiful thing to see and it never fails to take my breath away and make me feel very humble to be a part of it.

I have a few people I'd like to thank without naming names, but you will know.

For finding music and burning cds, for finding our name, for remembering what the hell move I had done last week , for walking through the door and bringing an energy lift, for the giggling down the back, for making us keep to the written script even if there is so much written in the margins we can't make head or tail of it, for the ideas and input with moves and timing, for all the sewing, the finding of bits for costumes and the raised eyebrows, the rolled eyes, the sighs, the goofy faces and the fun and laughter.

I will miss you all.

However next year is a fresh start with a beautiful dancer as their teacher with new ideas and moves, I am so happy that someone as capable as Jayde will be taking over, I want to wish her all the best.

I have struggled to do these newsletters, but I hope I have been able to convey to you my absolute love of dancing with friends.

Deborah Sodeau

Tampanya Maren

Drumming - there is something just so very basic to it - as babies we love to bash out a sound on anything handy. Some of us are fortunate enough to continue this behavior under the guise of drumming. Having a frustrating day - just spend some time hitting out a rhythm to clear the angst, and even better if done in company. And the added bonus is another favourite of the very young - the chance to dress up.

Tampánya Máren is the perfect group for just that - Pauline guides us along with new pieces to challenge us all with everyone made to feel so welcome. From day one, a drumming circle has room for all levels of expertise. Even if we forget just what rhythm the group is playing, we can find the base notes and stick with that and no-one is any the wiser.

The range of percussion instruments is overwhelming - Bamedam camp demonstrates this - every year there is another wonderfully exotic instrument to learn about - and maybe to have a go at. It was here I discovered the advantages of the riq (can be mistaken for a tambourine) and just love to play it, and when packing for a hafla with a few costume changes and props, to add the beautifully compact riq is just heaven compared to a tabla.

The Abbey is our next deadline, what would the dance be without the drummers? Should be fabulous. The other advantage with the drumming group is I see it as an avenue to remain part of the group when my dancing days are over - whenever that may be - so if you have been thinking of giving drumming a go, come join us big kids.

Vicki Cooper

How does one define drumming? Banging on a cylindrical shaped metal, wood or ceramic instrument would be one way. Using ones hands to create a rhythm or music would be another way. But for me, only one word is needed to define it. Fun.

Many teenagers in the world would define fun as drinking, driving, seeing a movie. But fun is sitting down with a group of people, maybe even complete strangers and playing a fast Beladi.

The drum is such a versatile instrument. You can play a nice bass rhythm for dancing, you can play along with music, middle eastern or even something by Owl City or it can be used as a footstool after a long stressful day.

Music, drums, Tampánya Máren, fun, life. To me all these things mean the same thing.

Blake King

Greetings from Jewels of Arabia

Welcome

Well another year done and dusted. Another hafla done and dusted and each year it seems to get better and better.

It's been another huge year for the Jewels with lots of performing at different venues this year. With each year, come more opportunities to learn and perform.

Some of the ladies are learning an original Community Troupe choreograph for the next mini hafla.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank these wonderful ladies for their commitment and support throughout the year. Most of these ladies work either full time or part time and are still able to commit to their days off and weekends to spread the joy of this beautiful dance to the community.

Some of these ladies have been with the troupe now for 5 or 6 years and hopefully we will still all be together for another year. There is always a costume waiting for anyone who wishes to join us or to come along to a practice to see what we are about.

2011 dates have already started with our first 3 gigs for the years starting in February.

That's about all from us for 2010. We wish you all the very best for the season and look forward to plenty of shimmies in 2011

Until next time, Marilyn

SOUL TRAVEL

TURKEY 2015

Have you ever wanted to see Turkey? Plenty of time to save!

Turkey 2015 Experience this amazing country as well as taking in the annual Ahirkapi Gypsy Festival in Istanbul and the 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ANZACS. A once in our life-time event. Please register your interest NOW as bookings are already being taken to reserve your place for this historic event. souldance7@bigpond.com Here are just some of the adventures that await you:

Istanbul
The Ahirkapi Gypsy Festival!!!!
The Grand Bazaar (move over Khan el Khalili!)
Topkapi Palace, Aya Sophia, Blue Mosque, Underground Cistern
Istiklal Cadessis (cross between Queen St Mall and Mohamed Ali St - incredible!)
Nights on the town with real Romani bands!
Lessons with Reyahn, Margaret's Romani teacher.
Cappadocia
Fairy Chimneys and Underground Cities too amazing to describe here! But we will see it all!
Cappadocian Folk-dancing lessons and celebrations.
Hiking (optional) through the forests.
Western Turkey
The Cotton Castles (Travertines) of Pamakkale, House of the Virgin Mary and Staggering ruins of Ephesus.

Plus cruise the Aegean Sea!

SOUL TRAVEL

E G Y P T - Tours 2011 and 2012

There are two tours being planned; one beginning mid October and one in January (exact dates to be advised). Please register your interest NOW to sign up for the Newsletters that will begin to prepare and excite you for your trip. **Please email souldance7@bigpond.com specifically to register for the Newsletters**. If you have friends or family coming on the trip, please register their email address or get them to do it in person.

NEWSFLASH;- FESTIVAL OF THE SUN OCTOBER 22nd EGYPT!!!

And the Soul Dance tour will be there! A special treat for those booked into the October tour!!!

The Abu Simbel Sun Festival, celebrated at the glorious sun temple in Egypt is a spectacular event that bedazzles all who gets a rare opportunity to observe the phenomenon. On 22 October sunlight hits the inner sanctuary of the great Sun Temple by Lake Nasser and visitors gather to commemorate this event.

Abu Simbel temples are generally considered the grandest and most beautiful of the temples commissioned during the reign of Rameses II, and one of the most beautiful in Egypt. Some say it is the most awe-inspiring temple of all ancient Egypt. The mountain-cut Temple of Ramses II also known as the "Sun Temple", was dedicated to the four universal gods Ptah, Re-Her-Akhtey, Amun-Re, and to Ramesses II himself. About one hundred meters northeast of the temple is a second temple dedicated to Nefertari, his beloved wife. This was in fact the second time in ancient Egyptian history that a temple was dedicated to a queen. The Temple of Queen Nefertari is also called the Temple of Hathor who was the wife of the Sun God so in a symbolic way, the two Temples, that of Ramesses II and that of Nefertari, bring Hathor and the Sun God together as one.

When King Ramses II carved the great Sun Temple into the mountainside, he angled it so that twice a year on his birthday and his ascension date, the inner sanctum of the Temple would be lit by direct sunlight. Every year on 21 February and 21 October, the sun would cast light on three god statues in the inner sanctum: Amun-Ra, Ra-Herakhte and Ramses. The fourth god Ptah of darkness would never be lit. However, under threat of erosion by Lake Nasser, both temples (King Ramses II and Nefertari) were relocated to a hill higher up the Lake Nasser shoreline. For this reason the Sun Festival now takes place one day later on 22 February and 22 October each year. On these days, shafts of sunlight enter into the temple and illuminate the statues of the great king Ramses II and the two sun gods Re-Horakhte and Amen-Re seated beside the Theban god Ptah, the god of darkness. As the temple remains in absolute darkness throughout the year and receives sunlight on these two very special days, the rare phenomenon is a scene that you just cannot afford to miss. Celebrated in a big way by the locals, undoubtedly the Sun Festival at Abu Simbel is one of the most uncommon and astounding festivals in the world. After the spectacle you can also join in the celebrations of dance, music, food and fun later in the day to round of the experience at the Abu Simbel Sun Festival in Egypt.

What's in Store

Hi & welcome to this edition of what's in Store.

It's hard to believe another year is almost over. We have seen some fabulous dancing during the year. That is one of the highlights when we attend a concert – not only do we sell our products & meet some fantastic people but we get to check out all the dancing & beautiful costumes.

Our new products from Hong Kong have been very popular. I will spend the next few weeks ordering new stock & taking photos for our next newsletter.

I have shut my website down for now but will be using ebay (once I work it out). So our products will still be available for everyone to see.

Thanks to all of you who have supported us during the year. I hope you are happy with your purchases. Your support allows us to buy in more products for everyone to enjoy.

Well, that's all I have for this edition. I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas & happy & safe New Year

If you have any queries about products please contact me on 0439439852 or email tobellydance@gmail.com

See you in the next edition, Sonya

Kidz News

Hello & welcome to

Well, it's hard to believe that our year of dance is over. But, what a great year it has been. Lots of dancing, singing, games & having fun.

How cute were these 3 groups of kids at the hafla. I admit, there were times that I had some doubts but everyone stepped up on the night & I couldn't be more proud.

No one ran or fell off stage, no one sat down, no one picked their noses & no one cried. They were simply awesome. Well done Kids!

We also had our Christmas party on the 10th. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did. The kids performed The Chicken Dance & Alice the Camel again for their parents & families. Thanks to all the parents/grandparents for attending & bringing a plate of food for us to share.

I have got some great ideas planned for 2011 & am looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Have a happy & safe Christmas & I'll see you all in the New Year. Merry Christmas everyone!

Until next time, Sonya

SOUL DANCE XMAS PARTY 2010

A Blonde Bombshell. A Black Widow. A Bordello Queen. A BAD Black Santa….. Where would one find such characters? Why, at a Soul Dance Christmas Party of course……. Where else??

Loads of fun was on the menu, followed by a large helping of fabulous food, and for dessert?? Lashings of Karaoke!

The rain didn't dampen the evening and the pool sparkled. If you weren't there, you missed a great night and it was all thanks to the generous nature of our beautiful Black Widow hostess, Janet. Lots came in costume to add to the fun and some interesting "B" costumes were created! Cool Beach Beauties, Bollywood Babes, Bordello Madame (I think you could all guess just who was behind THAT costume… Sylvianne, please explain???) It was great to see Birdwatcher Ken and his "Bird" Len again and the Bellydance teacher added her skills on the night with her selection of crowd pleasing songs, which of course were belted out in a spectacular fashion by the exuberant party goers (a few rock stars emerged) by hey, how much fun can one group have with, "Naaaaaaaaa Naaa Naaa Na Na Na Na, Hey Juuuuuuude"? All was progressing well with the crowd in fine voice, when a certain Bad Santa, who, just quietly, does a mean rendition of YMCA, managed to put the microphone into self-destruct mode, thus forcing everyone to retire for more food and frivolity of the less vocal kind.

Make sure you check the dance calendar early next year for the date of next year's Christmas Party and keep the evening free so all our classes can come together and share a little bit of fun and Christmas cheer.

A special Ho Ho Ho to our wonderful Boss Diva, Margaret who makes all this magic possible and to all the other teachers. To Wayne, our wonderful newsletter editor Shona, and all the aspiring Divas out there; Merry Christmas to you all!! From "Madame Baton" (aka Sharon)

HAFLA 2010

Our hafla was another great success. We were expecting variety and we certainly got that; from Classical Egyptian to Modern Egyptian, from Tribal to Tribal Fusion, from Bollywood to Hollywood (Tior Albah's Buble number!), from Folkloric to folk drumming (our own Tampanya Maren).

We had a number of "firsts" on the night. Tampanya Maren, our drumming group performed on stage for the first time for which we all send our gratitude and admiration! Tampanya Maren is such an important aspect of our school providing that authentic and vibrant soundscape to many of our events. Please give the members of the group much encouragement when you see them and don't forget one of the best ways to show our gratitude to them is to get up and have a dance when they're playing.

We also saw divas-in-training, Stephanie and Lauren each performing solos! Thankyou girls. You realise all us oldies wish we had starting bellydancing when we were as young as you! By the time you get to our age you are going to be phenomenal dancers!

For the first time, the Saudi Arabian style, Khaleegi was performed at a hafla by Nouktar Kiteer (Mell's class). It was a lovely introduction to the style for us by way of the beautiful voice of Amr Diab. Several people commented it was their favourite dance of the night. Mell we all want to know how you kept that hairpiece on!!!!!

Looking at the photos from the night highlights how beautifully we present ourselves here at Soul Dance. I am so proud that we consistently deliver classy, polished performances that make our hafla such a nice night for everyone.