Soul Dance Newsletter

Volume 7 April 2011

AHLAN WA SAHLAN

Salaam all Soul Dancers! Someone stop the 2011 train!!! I want to get off!!

I can't believe we are nearly upon Easter already! I feel as if so much has happened already in the year and we've only just begun.

The teaching team has been in a flurry of activity, planning things for the year and we are busy welcoming new teacher, Marlene Faisal into our midst.

The Abbey Medieval Festival this year is promising to be a real renewal for our group this year with the tribe taking up their residence in the 'forest glade'. Already I have sensed a certain new energy amongst people!

I hope you enjoy the newsletter! Thanks to our editor, Shona for putting it all together once again.

The Abbey Medieval Faire 2011

The dates for the festival this year are July 9 and 10. Those who have already checked out the new 'forest glade' site at the Abbey grounds, all agree that special things are in store for us this year!

I am taking the opportunity to introduce a few new things into the group this year and step-up the dance performance side of things.

Already some of you are indicating you would like to try participating for the first time in the group this year. It is always a blessing to have new members – they inject the sense of wonder and excitement we all remember feeling in our first few years of the festival. If you are curious, you can borrow a costume and discuss your participation with your teacher. We try not to overload newcomers so that they can test the waters in a relaxed, no pressure fashion. Go on! Give it a go! You only live once!

To whet your appetite and to learn about the Romani, the amazing race of people we pay tribute to at the festival, check out these comprehensive and well-researched sites, they are two of my favorites:

1/ www.romani.org
2/ www.reocities.com/~patrin/

Sydney Middle Eastern Dance Festival

This year, for the first time, Soul Dance is participating in the presentation of the biggest bellydance festival in Australia.

It is a very big moment for me. I remember as a beginner dancer about 12 years ago, hearing about the festival and wondering if I would ever be 'good enough' to attend any of the workshops. Then, a few years later I was stoked to attend the festival with Mell and see in person many of the famous Australian dancers and teachers who were presenting at the festival.

Now here I am in 2011, teaching there myself, and dancing in the concert alongside the talented ladies from our troupe, Gypsy Soul. It's funny how things work out sometimes. Check out the website at… www.sydmedfest.com (I'm on there!!!)

One year, if you find that the passion for the dance runs through your veins and you just can't get enough, I hope you make it there. It's worth it! And you don't have to be "good enough" – all you need is a plane ticket!

Gypsy Soul

At the Sydney festival this year, the Gypsy Soul Troupe is presenting a dance in the Turkish Gypsy, 9/8 style. We are ultra excited to be doing something that is very rarely seen in Australia in its authentic form.

Because the 9/8 rhythm is a very unusual one, it is often impossible for us westerners to dance to it. However, with the right introduction to it and time to get used to it, it gets into your blood like a virus! I have been privileged enough to be in nightclubs in Istanbul when the live Gypsy bands break into a 9/8 song:- to witness the explosion of excitement and energy from the crowd is an experience I will always treasure – it's truly amazing.

In Turkey, the Gypsies represent the 'good times' as they are always sought after to play at weddings and parties. The quintessential Gypsy rhythm is the 9/8 so when it is played it instantly turns on the 'party' mode in everyone. I am also teaching a 9/8 workshop at the Sydney festival this year – I dream of the style taking root in the west as it has overseas so I am doing my bit. Wish me luck!

Wednesday Day Class

At the hafla last year this class wore lycra!

And the verdict? They loved it!!!

Despite what you would think, lycra has an extremely slimming and classy effect on stage. Those of you who can recall the dance (the girls were in pink or blue costumes) would agree that they looked beautiful.

To make the most of the costumes we are currently working on another dance in a similar style that we can perform in the costumes again. This time it is to a Nancy Agram hit, "Ashtiki Menu" about the frustrations of trying to break it off with a beau who is more trouble than they're worth – have we all been there ladies?! :)

Tuesday Night

The Tuesday night ladies are working on "The Shisha Song" and having heaps of fun with it too!

It is a tribute to Egyptian bellydance superstar, Fifi Abdo who was famous for dancing around the stage with a shisha pipe. She is one of the most beloved dancers in Egyptian history and yet her repertoire of moves was very small.

It was that intangible charisma that she exuded on stage that captured the hearts and imaginations of her audience (she was also stunningly beautiful). She was also seen as 'the girl next door' and had a 'baladi' or street-wise sassiness that made it easy for the majority of Egyptians to relate to her. Check her out on youtube; (start watching this one at 1:45) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aq2WJH61Amc&feature=related

And, for shisha shenanigans, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj8mqgZblBY

The ladies in this class are also experimenting with making their own faux shisha-pipes to dance with for this choreography. Oh, and to set the record straight these pipes, in their real form, are for regular fruit-infused tobacco (not naughty stuff).

Wednesday Night

Well, look out! The Wednesday night ladies, who did the Bollywood dance at the last hafla, are about to make the stage sizzle with Tarkan's latest hit, "Op" (which means "kiss" in Turkish). It is an ultra-modern and funky dance.

Those who remember 'Vay Anam Vay' from a couple of years ago have some idea of what to expect!

Kohl: Drawing the Line

Known as mesdemet to the ancient Egyptians, kohl or kajal throughout the Middle East, and surma in Pakistan and India, eyeliner is still one of the most essential cosmetics available in today's wide variety of makeup options. **Along with henna, kohl has been part of the beauty regimens of women since the dawn of history, and an unbroken line connects the eyes of today with those of the ancients.**

Egyptians

The earliest historical record of eyeliner use appears in the ancient Near East and Egypt. Kohl occupied an important social role in the lives of the Egyptian royalty, serving as a cosmetic enhancement, health treatment, and indicator of social rank and achievement. Kohl was so essential to the Egyptians that it was applied before mummification and beautiful vials of it were included for the trip to the afterlife, preserved eternally. From the tomb paintings of the Old Kingdom to the encaustic portraits of the Roman occupation, recipes for kohl were passed down through the centuries. Ancient Egyptian kohl was made from natural minerals of the region. Black liners were created from either antimony or galena, which produces a lead sulfide. However, black was not the only color available to the ancients; other essential colors in the cosmetic palette included green ground from malachite, blue from lapis, and white from lead carbonate. These minerals were added to a paste that might include frankincense oil, almond oil and goose fat.

After the Ancients

Although the visual records of the history of the Middle East are sketchy at best, images of women with lovely, lined eyes appear periodically in manuscript illuminations created for royal courts from India to Turkey. In these images of courtly life, beautiful women with darkly rimmed eyes grace the pages of epic poetry and historical documents. According to these images, women of all ranks, from the highborn to servant classes, wore kohl.

Away from the urban centers, women throughout the entire region used kohl in their daily lives. Although there is little visual documentation of the daily material culture of Bedouin and nomadic peoples, the traditional use of eyeliner continues into the present day.

For desert dwellers, kohl helps to protect the eye area from dryness, cuts down the glare of the sun, and acts as an antibacterial agent; in this role as a traditional remedy, use extends to men and children as well.

Costumi orientali XVII century

Traditional Kohl

As in ancient Egypt, homemade kohl is widely used in rural areas throughout the Middle East. In urban areas, women have access to commercially made kohl using traditional ingredients. Lead sulfide, created from ground galena, creates a powder that is deep, rich and black. Antimony, a heavy-metal element, is ground and used as a black pigment either in conjunction with lead sulfide or alone. However, this ebony color is achieved at a high price. Both lead and antimony are toxic elements that cause a host of health ramifications. Lead poisoning is a common health problem throughout the Middle East and has been linked to the long-term use of lead-based kohl products.

(Article by Dawn Devine written for Gilded Serpent)

MONDAY NIGHT WHISPERINGS

by Helen

The Monday night class has enjoyed a rather relaxed start to the year with our first few lessons being comprised of "Boot Camp" style drills aimed at helping us regain our fitness levels after the X'mas & New Year break.

I am sure I have not been the only one to have followed and been affected by the dramatic and historical events in Egypt these past months. It really hits home how very lucky we are to live in Australia and how we can sometimes take our living standards and opportunities for granted. I am sure our hearts go out to the Egyptian people who are continuing to fight for a "fair go" and life without fear & corruption. Just because the issue has left our television screens does not mean that there is still not a long road ahead for the Egyptians to achieve what they fought so strongly for in Tahrir Square.

With the above events firmly in my mind our first choreography for the year has been a fun "Shaabi" piece showing the typical good humour of the Egyptian "man on the street" daydreaming (tongue in cheek) about all the wondrous things he will do with his pay packet!! Many Egyptians live below the poverty line and therefore this man's pay packet is quite measly.....so it is a bit like us daydreaming what we will do if/when we win LOTTO. It can be quite a challenge to put a lid on our "ladylike elegance" and embrace a more earthy, masculine style.....we have found the recommendation of wearing pants/jeans and chewing gum to be a big help!!! Thank you to Marlene for providing the translation as this helps both the teacher and dancer to relate and "feel" the music & choreography.

It was lovely to see Deb, Jess & Olivia at the recent "So You Think You Know Bellydance" Trivia Night. It was a fun, intimate night at the studio which provided a vast and very interesting array of Bellydance information to the participants. The flood victims were the recipients of all money raised on the night.

Helen x

DID YOU KNOW?.....

Cleopatra painted her upper eyelids blue, the lower ones a brilliant green, and extended the shape of her eyes out to the sides of her face as 'wings", using black galena (powdered grey lead ore).

Eyes were considered the most important part of the body to be emphasized with cosmetics. Although the initial use of eye make-up, like cosmetics in general, was protective (in both the physical and spiritual sense), the realization that it enlarged the eyes and made them appear more beautiful no doubt gave rise to its use for purely decorative purposes.

Originally eye make-up was kept in shells, then in manufactured containers of great workmanship fashioned from ivory, silver or wood. Some of these containers were made out of different types of glass according to the season of the year. It is still possible to find beautiful silver *makhallas*, kohl-containers stoppered with ornate applicators.

The literal meaning of kohl is 'to brighten the eyes'. Kohl is used throughout the East as a cosmetic and as protection against eye ailments and is traditionally applied just inside the eyelids. As black is known to absorb the light, kohl was used initially to protect against the glare of the sun. It was also used to help prevent eye disease, by repelling the tiny flies which transmit disease & inflammation, and to prevent the delicate skin around the eye socket becoming dry and cracked.

Today kohl is made out of pulverized antimony of olive stones (morocco), lead (India) and the soot from various nuts, seeds and gum resins. In the Egyptian countryside it is made by combining sunflower soot & charred almond shells perfumed with frankincense. Scented kohl made from labdanum incense is obtained by throwing a piece of this gum into an incense burner & collecting the ascending smoke in the form of soot, by holding a plate above the smoke.

Kohl is applied with a wooden, silver or ivory stick, moistened with water or rosewater before being dipped in the kohl pot. It is applied right inside the eye by taking the stick from the nose outwards, closing the eye over it as it is drawn towards the outer eye in a straight line.

MIRRORS OF THE SOUL

Like Eye Paint s My Desire.

When I See You It Makes My Eyes Sparkle.

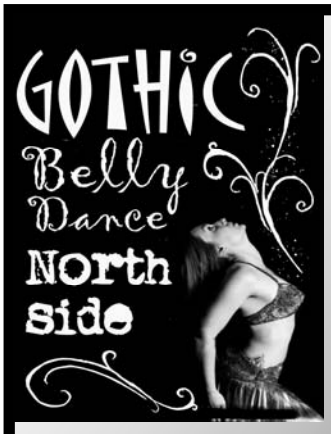
(Traditional Egyptian Song)

(extracts from "Beauty & the East" by Wendy Buonaventura)

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Updated every newsletter as events arise

April 14	Marlene's Folkloric Classes Commence at Studio
April 29 – May 1	Sydney Middle Eastern Dance Festival
May 7 or 8	Social at Studio
May 14	Kazuri Hafla
May 29	One Day Workshop – Indian Gypsy Choregraphy with Cindy Schwenn at Studio (more details to come)
June 10 or 11	Social at Studio
July 2 to 5	Winter Warm Up Workshops
July 6	Childrens Day Abbey Festival
July 7	Social at Studio – Henna Night (Henna Tattos & Pampering)
July 9 & 10	Abbey Medieval Festival (Caboolture)
August 5 or 6	Social at Studio
August 21	Extravaganza
September 2 or 3	Social at Studio
September 10 & 11	Rose Ottaviano Workshops in Gympie
October 7 or 8	Social at Studio
October 16	Soul of Egypt Tour commences (to be confirmed)
October 30	Pyramid Pulse
November	SoulDance end of year HAFLA (exact date to be confirmed)
December 5	Soul Dance Xmas Party



The Gothic troupe are working on a sword choreography at the moment!

We are dancing to "Schwarzelbenheim" by Therion, a song about underworld elves who are master black-smiths and alchemists.

There is much talk of sourcing pointy elf-ears to add to our costuming (Seriously??? I'm not sure…)

We are not only being challenged by trying to dance with the sword which most of us have not done much of before, but also by learning authentic Samurai sword drills to enhance our choreography (thanks Tanya!).

If…..

If you look

but you do not see……

If you listen

but you do not hear……

If you talk

but you do not think……

If you touch

But you do not feel…

Then you exist

But you do not live

TIOR ALBAH

I can't believe it's time for another newsletter already! Hasn't the year just flown past already?

Well our Monday classes are very different without Deb's always smiling face there now. But I'm sure she must be quite relieved to not be teaching this rowdy lot! I didn't realise they were so naughty (mostly cos I was the ring leader).

But I must say I ALWAYS walk away feeling completely happy – and somewhat exhausted – after spending time with such a wonderful variety of personalities!! It is lovely to see everyone having such fun, and still managing to learn new choreographies. Monday nights truly are the highlight of my week!!

Now since I don't have much else to report, I might head off to buy a whistle and maybe a whip, and a stool for the naughty corner...

Jayde and the ladies of Tior Albah

Do not go where the path may lead…..

go instead where there is no path
& leave a ….trail

Adult / Beginners Ballet Class

Ballet classes are now in full swing. I believe we are now at the ninth week of class as I am writing this. We've got into a bit of a rhythm now and while we are still working on technique we have just started a modern / contemporary ballet choreography to "Iris" by The Goo Goo Dolls. It is proving to be a challenging routine but nothing we can't achieve with a bit of practice! It's been a great journey so far with two students getting their first ever ballet slippers - gave me ballet warm fuzzies. Simply from working on ballet technique on a weekly basis and a warm up and warm down stretch has increased the whole class's flexibility significantly. If flexibility is something you'd like to gain, ballet might be a good option for you. For anyone interested in joining us, class is at 7pm on Wednesdays, and is one hour in length. Ballet slippers not required, nor is a leotard and tights. Ballet can be a great addition to other dance styles to increase body awareness, posture, flexibility as well as fluidity and musicality. You can contact me at bella_demonia@hotmail.com for more information.

Love and pliés,

Resident Ballet Diva Michelle

We are living in a culture of youth worship,
dominated by speed, immediacy, newness
control, competitiveness, profit exaggeration,
media blitz, variety,
constant entertainment
We always want more
believing that we need more
We are living in a culture of wrong messages
instead of quiet
of attention to the details
of life's slow rhythms
of not marching to a different drum
but to the sound of a flute
to truth telling
to healing of self and others
to fewer possessions but more friends
fewer movies and more books
fewer restaurants
more eating at home
less television
more walks
silence
quiet and silence
Peaceful
Shhhhhh.....
Do not disturb

Huge News for April 2012!!

In April 2012, Soul Dance will host an event that is shaping up to be bigger than anything we have done before.

We are planning a staged show, best described as a 'pantomime' that depicts 'moulid' - a festival or celebration that Egyptians hold to celebrate the memory of special historical figures in Islamic history.

The biggest moulid is the one held at the end of the month of Ramadan, and celebrates the birth of the prophet Mohammed, himself.

This is the one (actually called Eid el Fitr) that we will be focusing on.

But it is not just going to be a concert. We are flying in Egyptian drummer, Hassan, who blew everyone away at last year's BAMEDAM camp, to hold drumming workshops, and Australian star, Laziza to run dance workshops.

The weekend of workshops will culminate in the concert in which Hassan, Laziza, Soul Dance, and one or two other special guests, will star.

There will be heaps more information to come over the next months.

Greetings from Jewels of Arabia

Welcome

This year so far has seen the ladies of the Community Troupe having our practice at 9am to try and beat the heat! Afterwards we often take time to have a coffee and chat together at the milk bar at Old Petrie Town. Some of us will assure you the scones with jam and cream are to die for...

Our gigs to date have included dancing at Redcliffe Leagues Club for the View Club, an organisation which fundraises for the Smith Family; St Pauls Lutheran Care facility at Caboolture and a fundraiser for Breast Cancer and to send a three year old boy to Germany for treatment.

The fundraiser was a fashion parade organised by one of the dress shops in Old Petrie Town. We danced on a catwalk which proved quite challenging as we needed to review our dance plan to suit. Positive feedback from community members was received and we have all learned to be very adaptable!

Harmony Day on 21st March at Scarborough Park will be our next performance. Dancing outdoors at festivals and community events is great as you can engage with your audience better as they are usually closer and sometimes you can dance amongst the people.

Anyone interested in joining our group are most welcome to come along and see what we are about. Making friends, cementing choreographies learnt in class, improving confidence to perform and enjoying audience reaction and participation are some of the things you can enjoy! We meet fortnightly at the Studio on Saturday morning from 9 till 11.

Contact Marilyn Trama on 3203 8653 or 0410311275 to come and have a look!

Until next time, Diana

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

EGYPT - 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 per

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

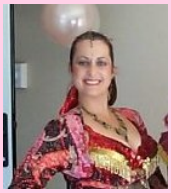
And the Soul Dance tour will be there! A special treat for those booked into the October tour!!!

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.

I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas/New Year break. It seems so long ago….

Well, it's always quiet at this time of the year, but it does give me a chance to check out new products. A lot of the suppliers release their new products or ranges at the beginning of the year. I am a bit excited about a few things that I have seen, in both clothing & accessories.

I can tell you that we are getting new fan veils in our first order for the year. They do come in a few colour choices but I will order two different colours to start with.

That's about all I have for you this edition. If you have any queries about products please contact me on 0439439852 or email tobellydance@gmail.com

See you in the next edition, Sonya

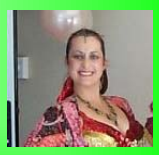
Kidz News

Hello & welcome to

Well it's our 1st edition for 2011. I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas/New Year break. All our kids are now settled into their new routines, school & kindy etc, and we began our kids' classes a couple of weeks ago.

Our future dancing stars are very enthusiastic & excited to be learning new moves & dances. I am finding that I need to prepare more than I expect to teach in every class, as they are like little sponges, soaking up the information. It is great to see their faces light up when they successfully accomplish a task, be it a new move or victory in one of our games. Of course, Copy Cat is still a class favourite - that's when I learn new moves!

We have plenty of vacancies in all our classes. If you think your little one would like to try bellydancing, bring them down for a free lesson.



Classes are held at the Studio:	Tuesdays	3 - 4 yr olds	3.45 – 4.15pm; &
		5 – 7 yr olds	4.15 – 5pm
	Wednesdays	8 yr olds & up	3.45 – 5pm

Until next time, Sonya

I paused at the front door, looking into the transformed studio, and was greeted by a couple of my classmates. "Here, you're in our team!" they announced, ushering me over to one of the colourfully festooned tables. Team? But I'd just come to be part of the audience, enjoy the banter of competition, cheer people on from the sidelines and be entertained by the performances through the evening - after all, as much as I love the dance and enjoy the movements, what I knew about its history and culture, you could have written on a grain of rice. What could I possibly contribute to my team? But as it turns out, in my twelve or so months of dancing, I had absorbed far more than I realised, and happily one little nugget of trivia even scored me an item of my choice from the array of covetable prizes on offer that night; I went home with a copy of "Serpent of the Nile", a comprehensive and engaging history of middle eastern dance through the ages. Now I know such things as who Kutchuk Hanem is, what the Ouled Nail are, and how profoundly the West has influenced the dance over the last few centuries.... so who's on my team for the next Trivia night?

Olivia.... from Gamila Ruh

We Welcome Miss Marlene

By now most of you are aware of the addition of, new teacher to our school, Marlene Faisal.
Marlene and I have been friends for many years and late last year we decided that many benefits were to be had for everyone if we joined forces for a while! Soul Dance now boasts the only native Egyptian teacher in Brissy and Marlene brings to Soul Dance all the knowledge and depth that this implies.

Marlene's passion and focus is the Folkloric dance styles. She wishes to teach the culture, costuming and steps of the Egyptian styles that are more pure, earthy, traditional, and folkloric-based. This is pure Egypt!!!!

How does this differ from what you may be receiving now in class? Soul Dance teachers attempt to give you a taste of the different folk loric styles but we intersperse this with the cabaret styles. Naturally, because we have learned the dance in Australia from Australian teachers (apart from guest international workshop teachers) we present a 'western' interpretation of bellydance which tends to use a lot of modern music and a lot of fusion with other dance styles like jazz and American influences. Marlene will not be teaching the cabaret style of dance nor the 'fused' folkloric versions. Instead in her class you will receive grass-roots knowledge about the history, costuming and culture behind the different dances such as the Saiidi, Eskanderani, Port Said, Hagalla, Nubian, Fellahine and other folk styles. It will be presented in a 'purer' form.

Marlene is also VERY keen to begin a men's dance class. It will be very basic and no dance experience is necessary! Our hope is to get some of your hubbies and partners involved.
Marlene's classes will eventually be on a Thursday night and only open to intermediate and advanced students (with the exception of the Men's class).

As a special incentive to add her class to your weekly dance regime she will offer her class to you at a discounted rate if it is your second Soul Dance class for the week! Perfect to step up that exercise programme!

She is starting classes on Thursday night, April 14th. Please contact myself or Marlene to book in!

I hope you will make her feel very welcome and valued in our little School- we are so lucky to have her!

Margaret x

Salaam!

My Mother told me that I started dancing before I could walk. I learned classical ballet, Spanish dancing and a number of traditional folk dancing styles, from around the world, at an early age.

I was born in Egypt, into a musical family, during the time when the country was multicultural. There I have learned to speak several languages and learned to sing in German, French, Arabic and English.

I am Australian now, prior to that, I was second generation Egyptian, of Syrian background. I grew up learning the true Middle Eastern traditions and the language in various dialects.

My love of the Egyptian Folklore started in the 50's, at the birth of the famous Egyptian, Mahmoud Reda troupe , who is the founder of the Egyptian Folklore. I was privileged to be present and witness their first performance ever, on stage, before they became famous. This marked the beginning of my own love of their style.

I followed the Reda troupe closely, learning from them and progressed by studying the Egyptian Folklore from one of the first Reda students/performer and later replaced her as a Teacher for four consecutive years, while she toured with the troupe.

Amongst my students were the Australian Ambassador Children in Egypt and some students who went on to perform in musical movies and programs on television.

In Sydney Australia, I danced and taught dancing occasionally at Middle Eastern Concerts, Cultural occasions, family gatherings and school fetes. In Brisbane I have been teaching the community for the past 5 years.

My ambition is to keep the Traditional Egyptian folk style alive and pass my dance knowledge, passion and love of the dance on to others.

I have chosen to join soul dance because I recognized Margaret's dedication and her students' mutual passion for the dance.

My idea is to teach Egyptian Folklore as taught to me in Egypt. I want to present dances forgotten in time, these live in my memory. Some of these dances have never been seen in Brisbane or Australia before. I wish to teach a Men's Tahteeb class and an Egyptian singing class. I hope to present to you dancing in a novel and interesting way.

I will be starting classes at the studio on Thursday nights commencing April 14th. Please contact myself or Margaret to book in.

I hope to see you all there, to share our passion of the dance and the love of life.

Marlene

MICHELLE JOYCE

STOP PRESS; Just before this newsletter went 'to press' we have had to cancel our workshops with Michelle due to pregnancy complications. Michelle is doing fine but needs to rest. Rather than delete the following article, I have decided to leave it in as it is relevant to our everyday lives....

About 5 years ago I received a phone call from a friend who was a bellydancer with another school; "There's this great dancer from the USA who is going to be in Brisbane visiting family in a couple of weeks. Why don't you organise some workshops with her?" Gulp! A couple of weeks to decide, publicize, and find a venue!!! Well, as I so often do with bellydance matters, I said "yes" then and there knowing that the Goddess of Bellydance who watches over me would help the other issues fall into place for me. And they did.

What took all the pressure off was Michelle's attitude. Once I made contact with her I quickly realised this was a dancer who was in it for the pure joy and love of the dance! She didn't care if we only ended up with 2 or 3 people in the workshops – she was thrilled to have the opportunity to teach and dance while she was here in Brisbane visiting her hubby's family.

We only raised small numbers, about 8 dancers, but the day of workshops was brilliant. Because there was only a few of us, the atmosphere was friendly and intimate and we had the opportunity to get to know Michelle on a level that we couldn't have it the numbers were high.

Michelle has worked as a dancer and instructor all over the world. Last year she toured the major cities in Australia holding workshops. We are so fortunate that she has ties here in Brisbane and that, even on a quick visit to OZ, we have the chance to learn from her.

Well, after that first humble workshop day Michelle's reputation quickly spread. The following workshops we organised in Brisbane a couple of years later were packed and the ones last year were a sell out.

The moral of the story? Well, there's more than one! From my perspective sometimes you just have to trust that the universe will take care of you. I knew in my gut that the opportunity to start working with Michelle was one I couldn't pass up and so, despite the conditions not being ideal, I said YES. From Michelle's perspective she let her joy and passion be her guide. There's no better guide than that!

....Michelle will hopefully return to Brisbane in 2012 (with new bub) for more workshops.