

Belly Dance Booming in Asia: Part one

Oasis Dance Center had something to contribute to this project. I think Ah Lok, discovered what the belly-dancing world was about after he and his crew attended our annual Xmas party! Oasis became the networking home base to cast our teachers Pasha, Janaki, Emmy, Elaine and Brandy connect with costume designs by T & T Enterprises and also become the training ground for the main actresses and dancers. The training started in December 2005. We finished the last scene by the 1st of March 2006. As the consultant, advisor and choreographer, I can speak for the dancers and myself and tell you that all of this was a labor of love for our art form.

The movie premiered in Nov 2006 and is appearing in Film Festivals worldwide. It is in Cantonese with English subtitles.

About Mey Jen Tillyer

Born in Toronto, Canada, Mey Jen Tillyer (Fuwzeza Fuddah) is a specialist in the many aspects of Middle Eastern, Oriental and folkloric dance cultures. She is a full-time dance teacher in Hong Kong, experienced in coaching beginners

through to professional performers and teachers. She is an active performer and choreographer. She has conducted Middle Eastern Dance classes at the Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts for the past 15 years. Since her first belly dance lesson, 30 years ago, in between schooling, working and raising a family, she has been able to travel and study with many great artists and teachers in the art of belly dancing. In 2003, she started the Oasis Dance Center, Hong Kong's first and foremost studio for belly dancing. She was the consultant and choreographer for HK movie project "My Mother is a Belly Dancer" which premiered Nov 2006. Over the past year, she has traveled to Taiwan, Singapore and Korea to judge for Global Asian belly dance competitions. This year she will be one of the overseas guest performers for the International Belly dance Conference in Toronto.

Belly dance in Singapore by 3A Gurl, Singapore

With Arab roots in Singapore dating

back more than a hundred years, it is not possible to determine with certainty when belly dancing found its way to our lovely Garden City. It is definite that the Arab migrant women-folk brought with them, as part of their cultural heritage, their dance, in its myriad styles. Whether it was termed Raqs Sharqi or Belly Dancing, or perhaps Oriental Dance then is debatable, what is certain is that this art form was practised, perhaps within closed confines and shared with close female kin and friends.

It is rumoured that Samia Gamal once graced Singapore with a private performance as part of the wedding festivities of a personage of the Arab community. However, a lack of evidentiary documentation dictates that this remains a rumour. What is more relevant is that it suggests that Raqs Sharqi was in favour as far back as the 1950s.

Today Belly Dancing, as it is more commonly known in Singapore, is an accepted art and exercise form. Structured courses, in many flavours and textures to suit different palates, are readily available at dance schools and studios.

Exercise-wise, choices include Belly Blitz by Amore and Shimmy Fit by Belly Dance Discovery. Dance enthusiasts can choose from a wide range that includes Classical Egyptian, Turkish, Folkloric and Fusion in its many variations.

Add on workshops by visiting master teachers and dance festivals, the available options can be mind-boggling especially

