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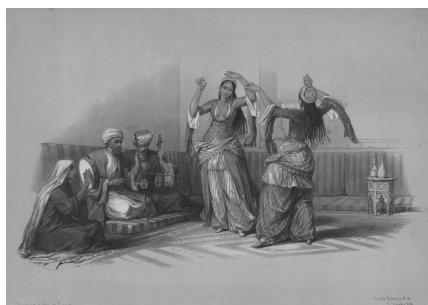
April, 2005

## Belly Dance

### Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy

Edited by Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young

For over a century, solo improvised dance, especially belly dance, has had enormous popularity, and by the 1970s and 1980s in the wake of the feminist movement, over a million women in the United States, and many more thousands in Western Europe became devotees of this choreographic



form. This volume traces several strands of this phenomenon. Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young provide an overview of solo improvised dance in the Middle East and in the West.

Several essays address the dance tradition in the Middle East: Najwa Adra describes and analyzes the performance of solo improvised dance in domestic circles in the Arab world, Anthony Shay analyzes the issue of how Islam and individuals among the Moslem clergy perceive and react to dance, Stavros Stavrou deconstructs the famous encounter between Gustave Flaubert and the Egyptian dancer Kuchek Hanum in terms of colonialism, Roberta Dougherty analyzes the popular images of the belly dancer in the Egyptian cinema, Shay addresses the question of male dancers and their performances, and Linda Swanson adds a whimsical interpretation of the famous twentieth century Egyptian belly dancer Tahia Carioca.

The dance was frequently seen in the West by millions of visitors to world fairs and exhibitions that were popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Sol Bloom, the entrepreneur of the Chicago World Fair of 1893 coined the term "belly dance." From that period, belly dance became a popular entertainment in the United States. American women found the dance to be a liberating vehicle and a means of adopting new and exotic persona. They developed several new genres of the dance. Barbara Sellers-Young describes and ana-



lyzes tribal belly dance, a genre that was invented in San Francisco, Anne Rasmussen provides an overview of the music used in Arab nightclubs in the United States and a description of the musicians and the club milieu, DonnaLee Dox analyzes the spiritual belly dance movement, Andrea Deagon addresses the

enduring trope of oriental dance: Salome's Dance of the Seven Veils through performances both from the turn of the century and contemporary versions, Nancy Lee Ruyter gives a historical perspective of La Meri's, one of the earlier interpreters of belly dance, Jennifer Fisher looks at the orientalist implications of the Arabian dance from the Nutcracker, often inspired by oriental dancing and seen by millions of audience members across America. An epilogue by the editors provides an overview of the topic and integrates the scholarly material for the reader.

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