



Bellydance with Nicola

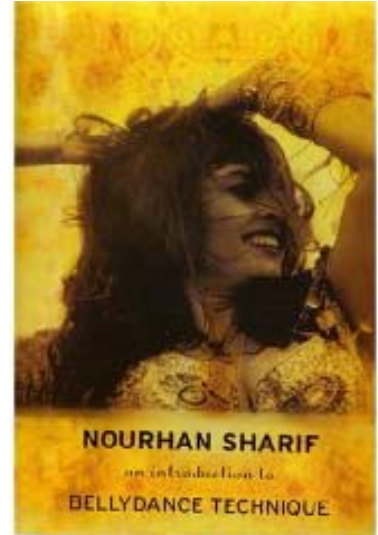
Video review: Nourhan Sharif: An Introduction to Bellydance Technique

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Nourhan Sharif, wife of dance master, Yousry Sharif, was an excellent instructor in her 2001 Saskatoon workshop. Technically precise, serious-minded, and disciplined, she demanded much of dancers in the workshop setting. (The same was true of Yousry.) Together they run the Egyptian Academy of Oriental Dance in New York. The Sharifs have worked to raise the bar for technical prowess in the dance on this continent, training dancers and instructors to achieve greater precision and authenticity in their dancing. Nourhan's Introduction to Bellydance Technique is no exception. Filmed on a darkened stage, well-lit, with excellent and easy to follow overdubbed instruction, Nourhan works through what the Sharifs consider to be the "basic" movements - by no means easy ones - and then demonstrates several of Yousry's drills. These are combinations, heavy on turns and travel steps, that the Sharifs believe build proficiency and precision in dancers. Most of the video is very well taught and demonstrated, in full speed as well as slow motion, and Nourhan is easy to follow. It is NOT, however, ideal for the inexperienced dancer. Certainly, very few dancers who've never taken a class could keep up. It is better aimed (in local, Winnipeg terms) at intermediate dancers. The drills are fun but challenging, and if you are not self-disciplined and able to self-correct, you may not know if you are doing them correctly. Some of the camera angles are also strange, such as the choice to film Nourhan at 45 degrees - not quite a side view, not frontal, not rear. Weird! I would also have liked to see a short performance piece. However, the postural pointers, breakdown, music (from Nourhan's rhythm CDs) and her many changes of attire (she designs dance wear) make this worth watching. For fans of Egyptian style, it is one to buy and use. I would rate it 4/5.



Author: Nicola

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Last updated: 2005/10/10