



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

- your audience is the most variable of any venue--in size, age, gender, class, background, intent, attitude, sobriety, response, focus/attention... the weather will play a strong part in your dancing--you should try to treat it as a dance partner rather than an enemy (with some exceptions) and dress for it
- figure out which direction to wind is blowing from/to and if you have a choice, dance with the sun to the side of you, not behind or shining right in your face. Bright sunlight can put your panties on display, throw nasty shadows on your face, and overheat you quickly. Wind may blow your prop into dangerous or precarious situations and locations, e.g. your mouth or onto your toes or into the nearest puddle.
- dehydration will be a serious and likely risk--bring lots of water
- you are unlikely to have access to change areas--arrive ready to go WITH A COVERUP and SHOES (not your street shoes, but ones you can dance in)
- find out where the nearest bathroom is
- you may be dancing on cobblestones, pavement, grass, dirt, gravel, mud, wood, you never know...garbage/litter, old gum, cigarette butts, spit (or worse), dog pee/poop, broken glass
- it typically attracts inexperienced dancers, for many reasons, including that in many cities, you can often get a permit just by asking and at you can honestly say that there's no accounting for the taste and judgement of the panel who may handing out permits/licenses
- it is the most difficult venue to perform well and successfully in, and actually requires the most adaptability, calm, skill, and composure

(Continued on page 2)



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

(Continued from page 1)

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

- you may or may not have people actually watching, and they may respond negatively, with everything from curiosity, disgust, laughter (not the nice kind), embarrassment, lewdness, and rudeness (cat calls, whistles, teasing, degrading names...)
- it is a wise idea to dress a bit more conservatively and casually--perhaps not your bedlah, fancy beledi dress, or anything like that--cholis/crop tops, skirts plus pantaloons, body stocking or modestly exposed belly skin. If you love a bra and belt look, consider making it a bit more traditional with a u-top or vest, plus pantaloons on their own or under a skirt.
- avoid any costuming or jewellery that may have specific religious connotations--facial veiling, bindis, henna tattoos, symbols, etc.. It is really upsetting to you and to someone else to find that you have offended someone by wearing something in ignorance or as decoration, when it means something very potent to someone else
- you may not have a chance to introduce yourself or your dances, so consider choosing more mainstream representations of belly dance be aware that an otherwise fine costume choice may become see-through or stained from sweat, rain, a spilled drink, pollen/grass/leaves, grubby buildings/benches/cars
- in this venue, your dancing is about being eye-pleasing ENTERTAINMENT, not art--try to think of what people are curious to see, what is popular and universal in appeal, while considering what you can do best to represent the true art and craft of bellydance (e.g. DON'T take the lazy approach and simply reinforce stereotypes). This is not the space to be the tortured or just plain weird artiste

(Continued on page 3)



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

(Continued from page 2)

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

- be prepared to provide an introduction if there is someone there to announce you
- have cards, brochures or other print information on hand should someone ask about your group or classes
- be prepared to give a “cocktail party” version of what bellydance is, as you may be asked questions
- realize that you may have to bring your own stereo system
- busking often includes live music, but in some cities, you will be lucky to get a drummer who is competent, and maybe one musician--learn to dance creatively but accurately to the rhythms and play your cymbals for some variety
- use music that is acoustic and more pared-down--it will stay more clear on any sound system and on the wind
- Ghawazee, some Saiidi, beledi, and American style dance (including veil and sword) are smart choices and usually received well
- choose music wisely--popular Arabic love songs, instrumentals, rhythm based selections--make sure you have an understanding of the lyrics (at least the gist)
- do NOT try to do something overly serious, complex, artful, or fusionastic-- it's a wasted effort and may be received poorly
- your big goals are to entertain, lift spirits, be inoffensive, be pretty background or easily-digestible foreground amusement. It is unlikely that

(Continued on page 4)



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

(Continued from page 3)

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

you will have the time enough and attention enough to raise awareness or inspire any epiphanies.

- you may have a stage area, or it may be a big open area, or fairly small and restricted--be aware of how a gathered crowd will affect what you can do and what folks will be able to see
- it is advisable to have someone as a helper, stuff keeper, and as security--you are most vulnerable in these venues--you may be harassed, hit on, followed or worse. If you can, go change after you are done and be very aware of your surroundings as you leave. Put your stuff in a backpack so you have your hands free and you can run if you need to. Do not leave your stuff unattended
- I would strongly advise you to avoid using these performance situations as an opportunity to flirt and pick up men--it's not safe, you may be objectified, and it sends the wrong message, professionally (don't shit where you eat, as my dad always said). If you want to cruise, do it after you are done dancing and have changed clothes.
- BUGS! Who knew?! Flies, mosquitoes, bees, wasps, no-see-ums, and more--may be attracted to your sweat, fragrance, the colour you are wearing, the stereo, the crowd. BUT, bug spray can and will damage your costuming and may run into your eyes and mouth as you sweat. Try patchouli, sandalwood, citronella, basil and/or lavender essential oils (10-15 drops total)diluted in a spritz bottle of water and a little vinegar or alcohol, spray on your body and head before you get dressed. Do NOT contact essential oils and fabrics or metals. Incense burned in the area will also help, but avoid direct contact, and check with regulations about lit

(Continued on page 5)



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

(Continued from page 4)

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

items. Be aware that scent may trigger allergic and asthmatic reactions in many people.

- think about making/bringing a ground cover to dance on---large heavy carpet, floorcloth, NOT a bare tarp
- dogs, children, birds, anyone may wander oblivious into your performance space--decide how you will cope--keep going? be humourous? make it part of your show? pick on them gently? DON'T GET MAD-- it is usually innocent and unintentional
- people may be intoxicated--be prepared, stay on your toes, report any incidents to an organizer or staff person
- find out if it is paid gig or not--if multiple dancers are involved, everyone should be getting the same honorarium or wage--it is not fair to pay one person but not another--WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS
- have something such as a basket or ornate, nonbreakable bowl to receive your tips, the wages of busking, traditionally--you may want to circulate with it after your set/show
- if you arrive and the situation looks or feels very unsafe, decline the job (if applicable) and LEAVE. Ideally, you have had some guidance before participating, and/or asked the pertinent questions.
- if you are part of a troupe, and the busking gig does not go well or is something you do not want to do again, it's best to be honest with your troupe leader(s) so you don't find yourself back there next Saturday with your teeth gritted and an oh-so-happy look on your face

(Continued on page 6)



Bellydance with Nicola

What you need to know about bellydance at BUSKING AREAS & STREET FESTIVALS...

(Continued from page 5)

Phone: 957-7520

Email: nicolaraks@mts.net
OR belydans@mts.net

www.nicola-bellydance.com

Author: Nicola

Copyright: © April 2008 Nicola, Last updated: 2009/01/06