

CAPE TOWN * SOUTH AFRICA * 6-9 JULY 2012
TRIBAL FUSION PROFESSOR * CHOREOGRAPHER * PERFORMER * TEACHER

Donna
Mejia

Weekend Programme Outline

Workshops:

Venue: Curvespace Studios, 25 Church Street, Woodstock, Cape Town

Each workshop is 2 hrs @ R330 (10% discount on early bird bookings before 1st May)

see further down for discount specials and packages

Saturday 7th July 2012

11.45am - 1.45pm

Clarifying Technique: The Art of Refinement and Physical Integrity

Saturday 7th July 2012

2.30pm - 4.30pm

Beyond Stationary Practice: Near Eastern/Electronica Fusion in Full-Blown Motion

Sunday 8th July 2012

10.25am - 12.15pm

**Beyond Stationary Practice: Near Eastern/Electronica Fusion in Full-Blown Motion
2nd installation**

Sunday 8th July 2012

1pm - 3pm

Movement Workshop 4 : Le Funk Arabi (L1 / L2)

Monday 9th July 2012

6pm - 8pm

Cross Training for Fusion Dancers: Silvestre Technique with Donna Mejia (int/adv only)

Lecture:

Venue: Erin Road Hall, Erin Road, Rondebosch

Saturday 7th July 7pm - 9pm

R50

Award Winning keynote lecture: "Digital Diasporas and Transnational Dance Communities: The Effects of the Internet on Identity Formation and Collective Cultural Memory."

There will be a tea/coffee station - but please bring any other refreshments or snacks you may want.

PRESENTED BY SOMA FUSION BELLYDANCE COMPANY
WWW.SOMA.CO.ZA * INFO@SOMA.CO.ZA * 0823593333

Donna
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Performance Showcase

Friday 6th July 2012

Jamrock Theatre, Shop 57, Brackenfell Shopping Centre, Old Paarl Road , Brackenfell
R110 per ticket (booking to follow on www.soma.co.za)

Show starts 7.30pm

featuring Donna Mejia (USA), Hilde Canoodt (UK) and top SA performers in Tribal Fusion Bellydance and other disciplines.

Packages and Specials

We will be offering a 10% discounted early bird special on all workshops for full payments received **before the 1st May 2012**

Packages	Total	Early Bird Discount save 10% (book by 1st May)
all 5 workshops lecture FREE	R1420 (save R280)	R1278 (save R422)
“out of towners” 4 workshops lecture FREE	R1270 (save R100)	R1143 (save R227)

If you live outside of the Western Cape - then you are considered an “out of towners”



Workshops Descriptions

Clarifying Technique: The Art of Refinement and Physical Integrity

This workshop summarizes and details the most efficient tools for unleashing the intelligence of the body in dance. Topics covered include breathing techniques, optimal alignment, muscle efficiency and building longevity through precision and strength. Rather than focusing on choreography, Donna will detail cross-training tips from various classical traditions that create a sophisticated and polished dancer.

Beyond Stationary Practice: Near Eastern/Electonica Fusion in Full-Blown Motion

This workshop re-visions the practice of fixed feet and unmoving isolations to an exploration of dynamic traveling progressions. Donna Mejia will present a stimulating class involving strong cardio/pulmonary engagement, firestorm drills, short moving combinations across the floor, and bi-directional/asymmetrical use of the limbs. This workshop may be best suited for dancers with at least 2 consistent years of experience in Near Eastern dance. However, adjustments and accommodations will be plentiful for participants with less experience. Athletic attire will work best, and optional footwear (flat dance shoes) may be helpful for those with sensitive feet.

Beyond Stationary Practice (Second Installation): Near Eastern/Electonica Fusion in Full-Blown Motion (Back by Popular Demand!)

This workshop re-visions the practice of fixed feet and unmoving isolations to an exploration of dynamic traveling progressions. Donna Mejia will present a stimulating class involving strong cardio/pulmonary engagement, firestorm drills, short moving combinations across the floor, and bi-directional/asymmetrical use of the limbs. Donna's practice sessions offer a globetrotting transnational dance experience, referencing movements from India, West/North/East Africa, China, Latin America, and Donna's own roots in America's Creole South. This workshop may be best suited for dancers with at least 2 consistent years of experience in Near Eastern dance. However, adjustments and accommodations will be plentiful for participants with less experience. Athletic attire will work best, and optional footwear (flat dance shoes) and knee pads may be helpful for those with sensitive joints and feet.

Le Funk Arabi

Within the dynamic cultural dialogs of transnational dance, the Near East has inspired legions of dancers. Notably American Hip Hop has influenced all popular music around the globe, and has evoked brilliant and very powerful compositions from artists in Near Eastern and North African countries. In this workshop, Donna Mejia details emerging traditions that dialogue North African and Arabic vernacular movement with American Hip Hop and Electonica subculture. After a vigorous warm up and substantial stretching, dancers will receive a variety of stationary and moving progressions that are intended to give heavy emphasis to the end of musical phrases and powerful downbeat accents. This workshop is all about responding to and punctuating the percussiveness in music driven by beats.



Donna's musical playlist includes some of the best Arabic/International funk, hip hop, hard core, mashup, and electronica in the universe!

**CROSS TRAINING FOR FUSION DANCERS: Silvestre Technique with Donna Mejia
(Intermediate/Advanced Only Please)**

Silvestre Technique is a contemporary modern dance training system rooted in the symbology and gestures of Brazilian dance and movement culture. It is astonishing to watch, and a revelation for dancers who've studied it. It is a strongly technical system, whereby dancers grow to possess strength, versatility, speed, elasticity, precision and elegant expression in their bodies. The Silvestre Technique is not only a system for training of the physical form, it also provides a paradigm for how humans relate to, receive and manage subtle energies/life force from the universe as they are embodied through the elements of nature: Earth, air, water and fire. It is an esoteric approach to training the body in which dancers deepen and refine their subtle senses to new dimensions. The system originated with Rosângela Silvestre, a powerful and exquisite choreographer from Salvador, Bahia (Brazil) responsible for developing an entirely new language in contemporary dance.

Silvestre technique gives equal importance to physical alignment, athleticism and emotional/personal expression. The technique seeks to support dancers in identifying and expanding their maximum potential as expressive beings. To cultivate a harmonious awareness of these values, class begins with standing meditation and slow, methodical attunement of the subtle energies and life forces within the body. Throughout the warm up silence and occasional stillness are revisited to allow awareness to flourish and deepen.

Dancers are encouraged to concentrate exclusively on their practice and set aside all distractions in the room, and in their minds. To build practitioners' responsiveness to subtle changes, tempos fluctuate, and musical accompaniment changes constantly. As practitioners grow accustomed to the sequences, they shift their focus to the subtle emotional and energetic cues arising in their field of awareness. Silvestre technique also presses dancers to acknowledge their present limitations and work intelligently to achieve new growth without forcing the body's capacities. Positions and sequences can be modified to help dancers match their ability in a manageable way, and avoid the consequential damage that can be done by trying to aggrandize their movement beyond their present ability. Personal examination is a key value and participants are discouraged from side-stepping their weaknesses. The atmosphere of a Silvestre class is typically intense, electrically charged and evocative. Personal examination is a key value and participants are discouraged from side-stepping their weaknesses.

Excerpt from an interview with Donna Mejia on her lecture she will be delivering in Cape Town:

Q: Donna Mejia receives Fulbright Association's Selma Jeanne Cohen Endowed Lecture Award, notably for your 2011 graduate thesis "Digital Diasporas and Transnational Dance Communities: The Effects of the Internet on Identity Formation and Collective Cultural Memory." We're looking forward to



your talk on this in Cape Town, can you give us insight on what led you to decide on focusing on this topic?

I would be honored and thank you for the opportunity! I realized that the Internet was the most weighted variable affecting the evolution of my artistic identity and cultural understanding. I wanted to elucidate the Internet's invisible influences on me, and those around me. In the past, the transfer of cultural information occurred over 10-15 years through elders and youngsters. We now disseminate cultural information within one week to 30% of the world's population via the Internet (critical mass for a tipping point). It's changing, entirely, the way we relate to others, the way we construct our personal sense of self, and diminishing the relevance of elders as cultural leaders. It's been fascinating research, and has taken my scholarship well beyond the dance arena. In fact, my work has received inquiries from U.N. delegates, and I'll be presenting at Syracuse University's 2012 Symposium on Public Policy and Diplomacy. Our dance community has a vital contribution to make at this moment in time. It's unbelievably beautiful and pivotal time to be engaged in art-making and scholarship.

Donna Mejia Biography

Donna Mejia is a choreographer, lecturer, teacher, administrator, and performer specializing in contemporary dance, traditions of the African and Arab Diaspora, and emerging fusion traditions in world electronica. For 10 years she was a faculty member at Colorado College and Director of the Colorado College International Summer Dance Festival. For twelve years she served as managing director of the award-winning Harambee African Dance Ensemble of CU-Boulder.. Donna is an authorized instructor of Brazilian Silvestre Modern Dance Technique and is the primary person assisting in codifying this esoteric study of dance and the body. Donna was the Guest Artist in Residence for Smith College Dance from 2006 through 2009, and now balances her time teaching part-time for Smith College, directing the Sovereign Performance Collective, and touring internationally to teach, choreograph and perform for colleges, professional and recreational dance festivals and private organizations. She writes articles based on her research and teachings in the evolving field of Ethics/Integrity in Global Dance Culture and presents lectures on the deconstruction of the femme fatale in dance.

Message from Donna Mejia

"I always learn and receive more than I could possibly give to students and there is never a dull moment in my profession. My "bag of tricks" has gained depth over the years, but in that development I have made many mistakes. I am pleased to say I have learned to do some things very well when managing a classroom and it is my pleasure to share the insights, pitfalls and research that have made this profession such a gratifying choice for me. I have been humbled many times and I no longer hold fast to the delusion that one particular approach works universally, so please bring your questions, notebooks, yoga mats and athletic attire (be well-rested and nourished too)... we have exploring to do!"

www.donnamejia.com