

## SHIMMY NIGHTS - Bellydance: My First Love

By Diana Seno

"Locked in this dance is a secret language that tells the story of women's lives... their passions and their spirituality, their sacrifices, their joys, their intuitions, their emotional life drama."

---Delilah

My introduction to bellydancing came at a most unusual time – 4pm on a cold winter's day in June 2004. Coming home to the TV after a 'strenuous' 2 hours at University, I stumbled across a children's after school program presenting a segment on bellydancing where girls from as young as 10 were perfecting the art.

This made me wonder - after the numerous trials and tribulations of existing and past relationships with karate, kickboxing, tennis, craft and sewing classes, could bellydancing potentially be THE ONE? My head said "don't be silly", and my heart said "why not?!"

And so began my love affair with this undeniable and alluring dance form. In the two years to follow it would take me to places I had only ever dreamed of and reward me with feelings I had never felt, and most importantly offer me experiences that would never have presented themselves had I not watched Channel 10 on that fateful day in June.

During the first few months of learning, I felt like I could spend the rest of my life with bellydancing. I intricately listened to every word spoken to me, admired movements to the exact muscle and absorbed the sound of the music until the very last note. Bellydancing's charming aura made me feel on top of the world to the point where I

couldn't hold back from telling all my friends how in love I was.

In January 2005, bellydancing and I moved to Sydney together. It was during this year that I introduced bellydancing to my friends at a Middle Eastern party in my inner city apartment. Food, wine, music and dancing were enjoyed by all. Needless to say, bellydancing attracted all the eligible bachelorettes seeking to find their inner goddess.

The dance again followed me back to Melbourne in September 2005. Around the same time a new relationship was beginning to form, which bellydancing had so thoroughly prepared me for...an Egyptian boyfriend. My love for all things Middle Eastern expanded to an actual person and while most people wonder if it was him that inspired me to do bellydancing, everyone is surprised to hear it was bellydancing that inspired me to him.

The culmination of my love for bellydancing came in 2006 where I travelled to the land of eternity, and one of the many birthplaces of bellydancing – Egypt. I was immersed into the beautiful culture that is bellydancing, and had the opportunity to meet women (and men) who felt the same way as I had for the past two years.

I unearthed the truth about bellydancing's origins, experienced its movement far and wide across the ancient land from the banks of the Nile to the golden sands of the desert. Its expression and its divine aura hit me like a thousand chariots, and its vibrance and colour shimmered in my eyes. I felt so unbelievably fortunate, that after only 24 years of life, I had truly experienced real love.

Coming up to our 3 year anniversary, bellydancing and I have so much to look forward to. Our future is one spent together, an emotional and embodying future at that. After all we have shared together, a new and exciting journey awaits.

Diana Seno - May 2007

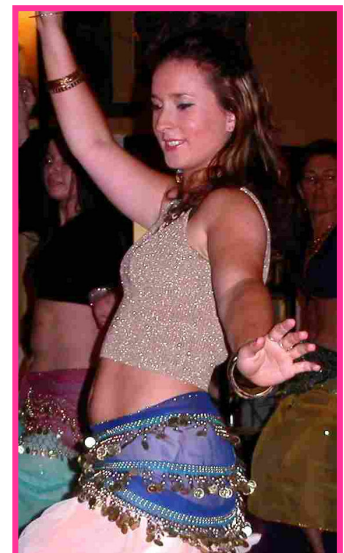


Photo: Diana Seno