

THANIA MENESES-FLORES

ZAHIRA

Co-owner and Artistic Director. Dragonfly Dance,
www.dragonflydance.ca dragonflybellydance@gmail.com

ACADEMIC HISTORY

- 2006-2011** **PhD Candidate, (ABD) Medieval Studies**
University of Toronto, Canada.
Dissertation topic: Dancers and Performers in Al Andalus
- 2004-2006** **Associate Professor, Dept. of History and Anthropology.**
University of the State of Hidalgo
Mexico.
- 2002-2004** **MA History of Art**
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada
- 1997-2002** **BA Art History**
Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana,
México, D.F.
- 1995-1996** **Drama**
CAPDEC-ANDA, Mexico city.

MIDDLE EASTERN DANCE TRAINING

Regular classes, Intensive Training, Teaching Training

- Dance Educators International workshop, January, 2016.
- Intensive training with Aziza, Blainville Quebec, (Winter, 2015).
- Completed HADIA's Level 1 Teacher's Training Program, 2008.
- Intensive training (private instruction, mentoring and regular classes) with Hannan Sultan and Roula Said, Toronto (2004-2008).
- Egyptian Folklore instruction with Nada el-Masriya (2007-2008).
- Tribal Fusion workshops with Audra Simmons.
- Advanced bellydance weekly classes with Shazadi, Mexico City, 2004-2005.
- Weekly classes with Mayada and Arabesque Dance Academy, summer 2004.
- Weekly classes with Ilana Salazar, Fall 2002- Spring 2004.

Seminars and Workshops with International Instructors and Master Teachers

- **Oscar Flores**, Fusion, Fan Veils, Veil, Tango Bellydance Fusion, March 9 - 11, 2018.
- **Assala Ibrahim**, Iraqi Dance Intensive, Nov 25-26, 2017.
- **Katelyn Schaffer**, Fluidity in Transitions; Jazz Bellydance Fusion, July 2016.
- **Aziza**, Oriental Choreography, Saidi, traveling steps and technique, July 2015 (Ottawa)
- **Luna of Cairo**, Egyptian bellydance Oriental Choreography, Egyptian technique and Shaabi choreography, July 2014
- **Sadie Marquardt**, Pops, locks and shimmies; Rolls, Flutters and Undulations; Drum solo choreography; Drum solo secrets, workshop weekend, March 2014.
- **Nath Keo**, bellydance workshop, February 2014.
- **Luna of Cairo**, Egyptian Shaabi workshop, June 2013
- IBCC 2012 workshops: April Rose, Mahmoud Reda, Sashar Zarif, Paola Blanton, Tamalyn Dallal.
- **Randa Kamal** Oriental and Folklore workshops, May 2011.
- IBCC 2010 workshops: Amel Tafsout, Sera Solstice, Jillina, Cassandra Shore.
- **Ariellah** workshop, April 2009.
- **Mira Betz** workshop, April 2009.
- IBCC 2008 workshops: Tito, Aida Nour, Amy Sigil, Bozenka, Mayyadah and Amir, Lopa Sarkar, Ranya Renee.
- **Hadia and Denise Enan** workshops: Turkish Rom, Oriental Technique and Beledi workshops, May 2008, Kingston, ON.
- **Ariellah**, workshops: “The darker side of drilling” and “Expressive Arms”, January 26-27, 2008
- **Aziza** Intensive Workshop, Toronto, August 2-5, 2007.
- IBCC 2007 workshops: Amir Thaleb, Randa Kamal, Sahra Saida, April, 2007.
- **Jillina** workshop, Toronto, 2007
- **Nath Keo** workshop, Toronto, April 2007.
- **Jim Boz** workshop, Toronto, February 17-18, 2007.
- **Sharon Kihara** workshop, Toronto, September, 2006.
- **Fahtiem** workshops, Oriental technique and finger cymbals, Mexico city, May 27-28, 2006.
- **Yousry Sharif**, workshops and Master class, Mexico city, February 25-26, 2006.
- **Amar Gamal** workshops, Mexico city, Oriental technique and choreography, January 21-22, 2006.
- **Saida Helou** workshop, Mexico city, Classical Arabic choreography, technique, Folkloric styles, Spring 2005.
- **Rania** workshops, Mexico city, Khaleegy, Folklore, Oriental technique, October 1-2, 2005.
- **Ansuya** workshops, Toronto, July 9-10, 2005.
- **Zahra Zuhair**, workshops, Mexico city, March 5-6, 2005.

- **Rania** workshops, Drum Solo, Sword, Isis Wings, Oriental, Mexico city, November 6-7, 2004.
- **Rachel Brice** workshops, Toronto, July 2004.
- **Magdy el-Leisy**, workshop, Toronto, summer 2004.

Seminars and Workshops with Local Instructors

- Ya Amar & Lavish, “It’s all Bellydance” weekend workshops, November 2015.
- Anjelica Scannura, Flamenco Bellydance workshop, May 2015
- Abigail Derbecker, Reda Style footwork and floor pattern, May 2015
- Joharah Kolishenko, Egyptian Clinic, March 2015
- Danielle Davies, Urban Fusion, March 2015
- Iana Komarnytska, Persian Classical Choreography, January 2015
- Anjelica Scannura, Flamenco Bellydance workshop, November 2014
- Joanna de Souza, Kathak for Tribal Bellydancers, April 2014.
- Roula Said, Daret el Ayram workshop, choreography, November 2013
- Iana Komarnytska, Ballet foundation for bellydancers, Winter 2013
- Iana Komarnytska, Turkish Rom workshop, Fall 2012
- Danielle Lottridge, “From the nitty gritty to the evocative”, Sept. 2012.
- Roula Said, The 7 Waves Bellydance Holistic Approach and Zills workshops, Summer 2012.
- Laura McCutchan (Serpentina) ATS Fundamentals with Laura McCutchan, Spring 2012.
- Laura Atma, Tribal Fusion choreography, Spring 2012.
- Danielle Lottridge “In-Fusion of Creativity” trio workshops: “Slinky sideways moves”, “ Soft, Strong and Integrated Arms”, “Compelling creative combos” August - September 2011.
- Yasmina Ramzy, Drum Solo choreography, summer 2005.
- Lila Zellet Elias and Marina Hidalgo, Moorish Dance workshop, Mexico city, December, 2004.
- Hannan Sultan, Oriental technique workshop, Toronto, summer 2004.
- Roula Said, Zills and Doumbek 10 -week course, Toronto, summer 2004.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Oscar Flores Gala Show**, March, 2018, George Ignatieff Theatre.
- **“Alchemy: An Anthology of Steampunk Stories” by Dragonfly Dance Company**, Nov. 2017, Alumnae Theatre. Artistic Director, choreographer, lead dancer
- **Busker Fest**, guest appearance with Dr. Draw, September 4, 2016.
- **Aziza Gala Show**, May 7, 2016, Palmerston Library Theatre.

- **“Luminescence” by Dragonfly Dance Company**, October 8 - 11, 2015 Alumnae Theatre. Artistic Director, choreographer, lead dancer.
- **Hip Hip Hooray Cabaret**, August 2014, May 2015, November 2015, solo with live music and duet performances with bellydancer Ruyah.
- **Grand Canadian Steampunk Exhibition**, solo and group performances, September 2014 & September 2015, Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- **Dragonfly Rocks the Boat: a Vaudeville Fundraiser**, April 2015, (organization, group and solo performances)
- **Luna of Cairo Gala Show**, July 17, 2014
- **Ad-Astra**, solo and group performances, April 5, 2014.
- **Steam on Queen**, solo and group performances, June 23, 2012; June 2013, October 2013, March 2014
- **Sadie Gala Show**, March 29, 2014
- **Pride Toronto, 2012, 2013, 2015** duet, group & solo performances.
- **Bellydance BiZzarre**, Kitchener, October 2012.
- **IBCC 2012**, solo and group performances, May 2012.
- **Mirage Gala shows**, group and solo performances 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014.
- **Great Lakes Convention**, Michigan, USA. Featured instructor solo performance, November 2011.
- **Johnny Hollow concert**, featured dance artist, duet and solo performance to the live band, October, 2011.
- Featured dance artist (solo and group) at several Steampunk events organized by the **Toronto Steampunk Society**, Fall 2011.
- Feature dance artist (solo and group) at **Salon Noir – Dark Cabaret**, Sept., 2011.
- **FanExpo 2011**, solo and group performances with the Airship Pirate Project and Mirage, August 2011.
- **Canadian National Steampunk Exhibition**, group & solo shows, May 2011.
- Regular performer at **Casa Barcelona**, Spanish Restaurant, 2980 Bloor St. W., (2011 – present)
- **Bourghiba School Dinner Gala**, Tunis, Tunisia, Summer 2010.
- **AYYAM ZAMAN: Rhythm of the Nile** dance production. Group and solo performances under the direction of Nada Krysko and Abigail Derbeker. Zahira was chosen to portray the legendary **Badia Masabni**. (October 3rd, 2009).
- **Rhythm of the Nile Gala Show**: directed by Nada Krysko and Hannan Sultan, group performances, October, 2008.
- **Feature dance artist** at **PAN on the Danforth**, Greek Restaurant, 516 Danforth Av. (2006-present)
- Regular performer at **Shiraz**, Persian Restauroat, 9185 Yonge St. Richmond Hill (2008- 2010).
- Regular feature performer at Mayada’s **Rak n’ Roll** and Roula Said’s **Funk ‘a Belly**.
- **Taste of the Danforth**, solo and group performances, August 10-12, 2007 and August 7-9, 2009.

- **Hadia Gala Show**, May 23, 2008, hosted by Adishakti, Kingston, ON.
- **Luminato**, as soloist and in group performances as member of *Rhythm of the Nile Dance Company*, 2008.
- **Inversion: Rewind**, an evening of Tribal and alternative bellydance, April 19, 2008, The Dark Side Studio. Solo and duet with bellydancer Lisa.
- **Aziza Gala Show**, Estonian House, Toronto, August 5, 2007.
- **Raquy and the Cavemen**, concert-show, July 22, 2007.
- **Internacional Bellydance Conference of Canada 2008**, Open Stage solo performance.
- **International Bellydance Conference of Canada 2007**, Open Stage solo performance, Open Stage Troupe performance (Sultannettes Faculty) and Main Stage performance with *Rhythm of the Nile Dance Company*, April 18-22, 2007.
- **Jim Boz Gala**, Estonian House, February 17, 2007.
- **Sharon Kihara Gala Show**, organized by the Dark Side Studio, September, 2006.
- **Canada Day**, Harbourfront Centre, with *the Roulettes*, July 1, 2006.
- **“Arabe de Corazon”**, full concert-show production at the University of the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, February 4, 2006. Organizer and Soloist Dancer.
- **Amar Gamal Gala Show**, Mexico city, January 21, 2006.
- **Featured dance artist at Cafe “Al-Basha”**, Pachuca, Mexico, 2006.
- Other performances include numerous Student Recitals and Haflas at Dragonfly Bellydance, Hannan’s Bellydance Studio and OmLaila Bellydance, all in Toronto and with Shazadi in Mexico city.

INSTRUCTION, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

~ Dance Instructor

- 2010 – present Owner, Artistic Director, Troupe Director and Instructor at Dragonfly Bellydance. Beginner to Professional levels, specialty classes and workshops.
- 2018 — 2019 Bellydance instructor at CardioFusion’s program for New Comers, supported by the Toronto Arts Council (Fall 2018, Winter 2019).
- 2006 – 2010 Bellydance instructor at Hannan’s Bellydance Studio. Beginner to Advance levels, specialty classes and workshops.
- 2006 - 2008 Bellydance instructor at OmLaila Bellydance.

~ **Featured Workshop Instructor**

- * 2015 - November - Featured instructor at “It’s all Bellydance” workshop weekend organized by the Dark Side Studio, Toronto.
- * 2015 - September - Featured instructor, “Steampunk Bellydance” at the Grand Canadian Steampunk Exhibition, Niagara-on-the-lake.
- * 2014 - September - Featured instructor, “Steampunk Bellydance” at the Grand Canadian Steampunk Exhibition, Niagara-on-the-lake.
- * 2012 – October – Featured instructor for 2 workshops at Bellydance BiZzarre weekend, Kitchner, ON, organized by BellyUp.
- * 2010 – November – Featured instructor at the Great Lakes Bellydance Convention, Michigan, USA.

GROUPS, ENSEMBLES and COMPANIES

- 2014 - present** **Dragonfly Dance Company**, Artistic Director, choreographer, lead Dancer
- 2011 – present** **Dragonettes – (Steampunk fusion ensemble)** Artistic Director, choreographer, lead dancer
- 2011 – present** **Dragonfly Student Troupe** Artistic Director, choreographer.
- 2009 – 2014** **Mirage Bellydance**, lead dancer, guest choreographer.
- 2007 – 2009** **Rhythm of the Nile Dance Company**, lead dancer.
- 2006 – 2007** **Sultanettes Troupe**, dancer
- 2006 – June** **Roulettes**, guest appearance.

ORGANIZER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

- * **“Alchemy: An Anthology of Steampunk Stories”**, Dragonfly Dance Company 2nd full length production, Alumnae Theatre, Nov. 10-12, Alumnae Theatre.
- * **“Luminescence”**, Dragonfly Dance Company debut production, Alumnae Theatre, October 8 - 11, 2015.
- * **Dragonfly Rocks the Boat: A Vaudeville Fundraiser**, at ‘The Boat Kensington’, April 2015.
- * **Dragonfly Student Showcase**, George Ignatieff Theatre, annual show 2011 - 2019.
- * **Majlis!**, Dragonfly Dance Studio, March 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.
- * Diverse Haflas and event nights at Dragonfly Dance Studio, 2010 - present.
- * **“Arabe de Corazón”** , full bellydance concert show in Pachuca, Hgo, Mexico organized with bellydancer Maria Shazadi and the University of the State of Hidalgo.

OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES

- 2013 – 2014 Special Appearance as translator (English to Spanish) and featured dancer in Prof. George Sawa’s YouTube series “Arabic Music Appreciation for Bellydancers”
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi3xK1WtrKiI3xb0vfrt2xg>
- 2012 – Fall Translator for the book “Arabic Music Appreciation for Bellydancers” by Dr. George Sawa, from the English original to Spanish.
- 2012 - summer Appearance in the Space Channel regarding Steampunk Bellydance Fusion.
- 2012 – May Lecture: “The Rhetoric of Dance: the Medieval Salome” at IBCC.
- 2012 Bellydance documentary by the Associate Press Television News.
- 2005 Three Conferences regarding the History and Interpretation(s) of Oriental Dance, UNAM and UAEH, Mexico.
- 2005 Appearance in the DVD Aziza Ultimate Practice Companion.
- 1994 – 2000 Music Instructor – Electronic Organ, Mexico. (Yamaha) (Zahira holds a Grade 6 in Yamaha Electone)

Zahira has a strong basic foundation in Ballet, Jazz, Mexican Folklore, Latin dances and aerobic dance movement, acquired from an early age and throughout her life.

LANGUAGES

Spoken – Spanish, English

Reading - French, Italian, Latin

Basic knowledge of Arabic