

# VINTAGE ORIENTAL BELLYDANCE CLASSES

WITH JANIM

## What is vintage oriental style bellydance?

Throughout the 20th century there were Middle Eastern immigrant nightclubs where various Middle Easterners would gather to enjoy Middle Eastern music and dancing. Often they would be a mixed group with Arabs, Armenians, Turks, Greeks and Persians gathering. The music would be a mix of popular tunes from all these different cultures. The dancers were sometimes immigrants themselves and later Americans that fell in love with their exposure to Middle Eastern culture, music and dance. They learned from immigrants, films, postcards, paintings and whatever else they could get their hands on and a unique style of Oriental dance emerged that mixed influences from many different Middle Eastern countries and the imagination.

Distinctive attributes of Vintage Oriental in addition to a free mix of elements from several Middle Eastern cultures are extensive use of finger cymbals, extended veil dances, sword dancing and dancing with snakes. Some names: Nejla Ates, Ozel Turkbaz, Semra, Morocco, Serena Wilson, Ibrahim Farrah, Bert Balladine, Jamila Salimpour, Nakish....

## HEAD SLIDES

### Head Slide 1 (4/4)

To do this move you will need to slide your head from side to side using the muscle in the back of your neck. When you practice this move you should do it in front of a mirror so you can see if your doing it right. Another helpful tip for practicing is to place your hands on your shoulders to prevent them from moving. When you can move your head separate from your shoulders then you should try holding your hands out at the side of your head and try to reach your ear towards your hand. This move often takes a lot of practice. When you have it down try it with music. Slide your head right, left, right, left. That's a 4/4 slide.

### Head Slide 2 (3/4)

To do this move you will need to slide your head from side to side using the muscle in the back of your neck. When you practice this move you should do it in front of a mirror so you can see if your doing it right. Another helpful tip for practicing is to place your hands on your shoulders to prevent them from moving. When you can move your head separate from your shoulders then you should try holding your hands out at the side of your head and try to reach your ear towards your hand. This move often takes a lot of practice. Slide your head right, left, right, pause, left, right, left, pause. That's a 3/4 slide.

## RIB CIRCLES, LIFTS, AND DROPS

### Horizontal Circle

Keeping the rest of the body still, slide the rib cage to one side, then forward, the other side, and pull the ribcage back.

### Vertical Circle 1 (side to side)

Keeping the rest of the body still, slide the rib cage to one side, then lift it up, slide the rib cage to the other side, and then drop the rib cage down.

### Circle with a shimmy

Start with just a circle then try to add a shoulder shimmy try it slowly and small at first then as you grow more comfortable with it increase the speed.

### Lift

Lift the ribcage up. Try to practice lifting then dropping and pushing forward and back. There is a difference between forward and up.

### Drop

Drop the rib cage by contracting the diaphragm. Try to practice lifting then dropping and pushing forward and back. There is a difference between forward and up.

## HIPS

### Horizontal Figure Eight 1

With your knees bent and your feet hip width apart push your right hip backward and transfer your weight onto the right foot. Now push your right hip out to the side, to the front, and then pull it back in and push the left hip backward and transfer your weight onto the left foot. Now push the left hip out to the side, to the front, and then pull it back in. Try to keep it parallel to the floor.

### Reverse Horizontal Figure Eight

With your knees bent and your feet hip width apart push your right hip forward and transfer your weight onto the right foot. Now push your right hip out to the side, to the back, and then pull it back in and push the left hip forward and transfer your weight onto the left foot. Now push the left hip out to the side, to the back, and then pull it back in. Try to keep it parallel to the floor.

### Vertical Figure Eight

Standing in the basic position bend the right knee pushing the right hip down. Next push it up to the side. Now straighten your right leg while bending the left knee causing the right hip to come up and the left to drop down. Then push the left hip out to the side and then pull it up by straightening the left leg. Try to keep it parallel to the wall.

### Reverse Vertical Figure Eight

Standing in the basic position Straighten the right knee pushing the right hip up. Next push it down to the side. Now bend your right leg while straightening the left knee causing the right hip to drop down and the left to come up. Then push the left hip out to the side and then push it down by bending the left leg. Try to keep it parallel to the wall.

### Lift/Lift in a Circle

Start with both knees bent slightly. Put one foot slightly in front of the other touching only the ball of your foot to the floor. Most of the weight should be in the standing foot. It may help your balance if you lean backward slightly. If you lean back make sure that your back is kept straight. Now drop the hip down and lift it up on the beat. To circle around yourself while lifting you need to step with your free leg. When you step you then pivot on your standing leg and propell your body around. It might help to think of stepping towards a certain corner in a room and then the next corner and the next..., or corner, wall, corner, wall.

### Drop

Start with both knees bent slightly. Put one foot slightly in front of the other touching only the ball of your foot to the floor. Most of the weight should be in the standing foot. It may help your balance if you lean backward slightly. If you lean back make sure that your back is kept straight. Now raise the hip up and drop it down on the beat.

### Drop, Kick

Start with both knees bent slightly. Put one foot slightly in front of the other touching only the ball of your foot to the floor. Most of the weight should be in the standing foot. It may help your balance if you lean backward slightly. If you lean back make sure that your back is kept straight. Now lift your hip up and drop it down on the beat once and then the next time you drop it kick your heel out while you drop your hip. Keep alternating with your foot touching, foot kicking, touching, kicking, etc... Try to keep the rest of the body still and not bouncing up and down.

### Drop in a Circle

First follow the directions for the drop kick. Now after you kick right when you touch with your other foot, you pivot on your standing foot about an eighth or a quarter of a turn (depending on how far you want to turn each time)

## SHIMMIES

### 4/4 Shimmy

Stand with your knees slightly bent and your feet together with the pelvis tucked underneath you comfortably. Now straighten the right leg (do not lock it). Next straighten (keep it soft do not lock it) the left leg while bending the right leg. The movement comes from the thighs and the weight is placed evenly on both feet. The faster you go the smaller the movement will get. When done very fast this is generally considered a “flutter” or “vibration”.

### Sliding Shimmy

While doing a very small fast shimmy (also known as a flutter) slide your hips out to the right, back to center, and out to the left, then back to center. The weight is mostly on the right when sliding right, mostly on the left when sliding left, and evenly distributed when you come back to center.

### 3/4 Shimmy

(Also known as a walking shimmy.) Start with your knees bent slightly and your feet together underneath you. Step onto your right foot and put all your weight on that foot then straighten your right knee, bend it again, and then straighten it again. Now step onto the left foot and put all your weight into that foot and straighten your left knee, bend it again and then straighten it again. It is essentially two shakes on each hip. There are many variations on 3/4 shimmies some people teach it as an up and up movement others teach it as a down and down movement. Some teach it as an out and out, up and out, out and up, or even a twisting forward and back movement done to a 3/4 timing. Although not all variations are described here several are shown below. The downward versions are sometimes called “down hips” or “Sohair Zaki Hips” because it was her signature movement. Below are several examples of different variations although this written description describes simply and up and up type. You could reverse the directions for a down and down.

### ChooChoo Shimmy 1

Stand with your feet together underneath you and your knees slightly bent, feet flat on the floor. Shuffle your feet across the floor allowing the hips to go along for the ride. Your weight should be placed equally on both feet. The shuffling sounds like a train going chuga-chuga chuga-chuga which is where many say it get's its name from. The movement can also be done on the balls of the feet as demonstrated in the video below.

### Horizontal Shimmy - Washing Machine Shimmy

This is essentially a twist, a very small very fast twist. To do this stand with your feet underneath you and your knees slightly bent, now twist your right hip forward just a teeny tiny bit, staying parallel with the floor. Next twist the left hip forward just a teeny tiny bit still staying parallel with the floor. Start out slow if you have to and then build up speed gradually as you practice. The end result should be a very small and very fast twisting motion.

### Shoulder Shimmy

The shoulder shimmy is done by thrusting one shoulder forward while pulling the other shoulder back. Do not think of it as shaking your boobs, but as shaking your shoulders (the breasts will come along for the ride).

## SHIMMY FEST.

### SHARP:

You must be able to move your body percussively, so you'll need to develop the basic dance techniques to do so. Work on Locks, Pops, Drops, and Stops. For example, practice your hip shimmies in the soft, relaxed style, working only through the knees. Then tighten your glutes, your quadriceps, even your abs when you move from side to side. This will give you crisp, punctuating hip movements. You should see the difference in your hip wrap: coins or beads will vibrate when doing soft shimmies, but should flip up when doing sharps. Both the pelvis and chest allow for pops and drops that are perfect for hitting accents. Besides the usual sharp movements, however, try breaking down a normally smooth movement.

## HIPS:

For me, hips are the foundation of a good drum solo performance. Practice big and little hip movements, fast and slow variations. Work on breaking big movements down into small, sharp ones. Master your lightning-fast shimmies and then slide them side to side, transferring your weight from foot to foot. Add a shimmy to virtually any other movement like a forward pelvic roll or a figure eight. This is particularly effective when done to a drum roll or when the drum is so fast, you couldn't possibly hit each beat.

## ISOLATIONS:

Isn't this dance all about controlling your body and isolating the different areas of your body? Really work on keeping your upper body still while your hips and legs move (and vice versa). Also, polish your slow movements. Contrary to what a drum solo initially tells you, it does not need to be all sharps and stops. A slinky undulation or rolling maia's lay nicely over a soft drum roll.

## MOVEMENT:

While I usually stay in place for a drum solo--the nature of the song just calls for that kind of attention--you can travel a bit. Practice travelling steps that you can accomplish quickly like three-step-turns and short running steps. A good time to travel or turn is during pauses in the music or on drum rolls.

## MIND/BODY:

Your mind must be actively involved not just in knowing your dance vocabulary, but in knowing the music inside and out. Try to hear it as more than simply drums. Hear all the pauses and the level of the drums (soft or loud). Feel the mood of the piece. While most drum solos are high energy, some are playful, others fiery, others passionate, some all three.

## YOWZA FACTOR:

If you choose not to choreograph your drum solo--and to be honest, while I usually choreograph my other dances, I really enjoy the spontaneity of improvising to drums--try planning out a couple of dynamic combinations for particularly noticeable parts of the drum solo. If you have a couple of killer combos, it can really add punch to an improvisational piece and will relieve you of having to come up with something new every time.

## FUN:

If you don't have it, your audience certainly won't. Even if you're nervous, you should enjoy your music, enjoy your dance. Otherwise, what are you doing on stage? Practice your smile just like you practice your shimmies.

## ENERGY:

See FUN. Work on putting your heart and soul into your moves. Does the drum solo say raw power? Let the audience see it in your face and the strength of your hip movements.

## STAMINA:

You must be physically prepared to do a drum solo or your exhaustion will show and your moves will become sloppiest just when they need to be sharpest. This is true for any piece of music you wish to perform, but especially for the intensity of drum solos. You can't rely on performance adrenaline to carry you through, either. That stage-presence rush may keep the energy in your heart and the smile on your face, but if you aren't fit enough to finish the piece, your muscles simply won't be serving you like they should. I usually dance a 5 minute drum solo a minimum of 4 times in a row at each practice session. I know if I can have as much detail in the last run through as I did on the first, I'll be able to give my best in performance. I know that many instructors advise their students to take up another form of aerobic exercise to build stamina. In my experience, I've found that a loop tape of 20 minutes of drum solos will have me sweating sufficiently and is a whole lot more fun than a step class!

## TIME:

While this is largely subjective, I really think that a drum solo over 5-6 minutes is just too long for you to dance to and for the audience to listen to. While I love drums, the richness and complexity that all the other instruments provide is just as valuable and your drum solo will stand out even more if you haven't drummed it to death! I hope these tips help you enjoy and perfect your next drum solo!