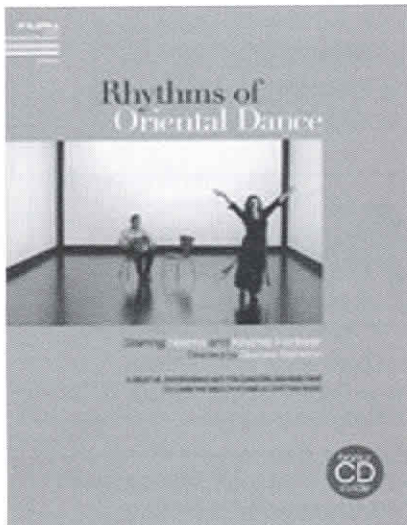


## Rhythms of Oriental Dance As reviewed by Oberon



I was unfamiliar with Nesma and her work with Khamis Henkesh which forms the content of this set of DVD's called Rhythms of Oriental Dance. Happy day when my Editor, Zaina Hart gave me such a thoughtful and complex project to review.

Wow .. where to begin ? The project is well packaged with a seriously artistic look that may be too subtle among the volumes of spangled "babes" and mysteri-

ously clad covers of DVD's and CD's that load the web sites and tables of M.E. music vendors. Simply – it has the picture of Drummer and Dancer backlit in a sparse yet polished, studio space.

Upon opening the cover, you will find a brief biography, an introduction to both artists. She is a Spaniard, who spent five years in Cairo, studying Oriental Dance and Egyptian Folklore. Performing with her own orchestra she admits to 3,500 shows all over Cairo – Phew! She was the only non – Egyptian dancer to perform with the National Egyptian Folkloric Reda Ballet Company and has founded her own school and dance company in Spain – Al Andalus Danza.

Khamis Henkesh, born to Cairo is a self taught artist who composes, writes and performs all around the world. Considered a "heavyweight" in Arabic Percussion, he has accompanied the most prestigious musicians and dancers on the Egyptian stage today. (This information I derived from their brief introductions).

What comes from the collaboration of these obviously, serious artists and their talented director Gustav Salmeron, is an inspired

and useful tool for anyone with the patience and desire to really understand the rhythms of this dance.

Instantly - I appreciate the internationality of the project when I am asked to select my sub-titles from among eight different languages. These subtitles are so easy to read against the back-drop of the content that I feel right away to be in an easy conversation with Nesma and Khamis.

The opening screen displaying the main menu is broken up into five selections, The Movie – Karaoke – Chapters – Extras – Subtitles.

The "**Movie**" is an enchanting conversation of words and art between these two obviously closely bonded artists. During this time as they are seated face to face, they discuss the rhythms, Wahda, Masmoudi, Fallahi, Saidi, Malfouf, Ayoup and the roll and variations thereof – followed by a drum solo using the rhythms and variations. Each rhythm is discussed and played and then charmingly and simply performed for us by the exotic Nesma wearing practice garb and demonstrating how the dancer might choose to respond to these rhythms.

The "**Karaoke**" - ingenious. I will describe it using their words that appear in a booklet that accompanies this set with terms for understanding this portion. A fun and educational way to the study of rhythms and percussion. As the percussionist plays, a corresponding pattern of symbols accompanies him on screen and a yellow cursor moves along the symbols to highlight each beat. Nine rhythms and four ways to beat the rhythm. Each rhythm is played with a different degree of difficulty. Dancers, Choreographers, Musicians – you get to follow along as the rhythms appear in symbols on your screen!. What a Tool!

"**Chapters**" is a helpful little collection of "thumbnails" that allows you to visit any rhythm selection and dance demonstration at will just by hitting on that section. Extremely user friendly.

"**Extras**" include some insight to the making of the DVD, a photo gallery and bios of the two Artists and their sophisticated Director.

Finally – "**Subtitles**" allows you to change languages at with ease.

I would consider this mind-bending wealth of serious education a "find" in itself, but this set also includes another CD of the rhythms being performed with clarity and attitude by the endearing and expressive Khamis Henkesh.

O.K. – the highlight for me? An actual performance between **Nesma and Khamis** – a traditional Egyptian dance with an inter-course between drummer and dancer that finally made sense to me. Polished, refreshing and highly entertaining!

I think finding this DVD is a rewarding treasure that alone confirms the value of the education found in publications like "The Belly Dancer Magazine". I can't begin to tell you the money I've spent for a "tid-bit" or two - maybe - this DVD is everything you'll expect! I hope you'll join me in the next issue for the review of the Nesma's music CD's.

Note Page 38 in this issue for their advertisement and information.

[www.nesmamusic.com](http://www.nesmamusic.com)