

Heléna Warbasse Melone

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HIGHLIGHTS OF WORK AS DANCE THERAPIST, TEACHER & ARTIST:

- 2008 week-long residency at one-room school house, grades k-7 & utilizing 4 idioms, Matinicus, ME
- 2007 accepted as Arts Educator by Maine Arts Commission
- 2007 & 2006 - Middle Eastern Dance and Flamenco, at Dance New England Summer Camp, Poland, ME, a 10-day international, multi-idiom dance camp
- 2006 to Present - Dance instructor for Girls Unlimited and Maiely Girls: taught statewide workshop (2001); after-school program series and Mainely Girls' Conference, 2007 & 2008 in mid-coast ME.
- 2006 - "3-D Dance Performance Workshop" -- Collaboration with 2 modern dancers for Waterfall Arts, Belfast, ME aged 9 - 50 in creating individual and group pieces and culminating in a performance at the Rockland Opera House. Focus: individual technique, exploring choreography, and integration.
- 2005 - 2008 - Teacher/staff member for "Daughters of the Earth," a three-day multi-modal women's empowerment workshop celebrating the Earth and our place on it.
- 2005 & 2006 - Teacher/staff member for "Belly and Womb Conference," a women's workshop helping women act and speak from their source, to give voice to their creativity.
- 2004 to 2006 - "Women in Power," Petersham, MA, assistant, four-day workshop integrating psychodrama, myth, play, ritual, and Shadow Work™ to help women reclaim their voices, place and power in the world.
- 2004 - present: independent contractor dance therapist, including work for SteppingStones of the Kremple's Brain Injury Foundation & Ethel's Tree of Life; facilitate workshops to focus on exploring movement for relaxation, empowerment, expression, and connection.
- 2001 to present - Multi-modal dance performer, instructor & cultural teacher in schools throughout MA, NH, and ME (contacts listed upon request)
- 1999 to present - Flamenco & Middle Eastern dance instructor Phillips Exeter Academy
- 1999 to present - independent Middle Eastern dance and Flamenco instructor

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1993–1995 & 1997-2003: English teacher, primarily at Phillips Exeter Academy, 1993 - 2003 (adjunct, with some dorm responsibilities)
- 1995 – 1997: English teacher at Native American Preparatory School, (dorm and extracurricular responsibilities)

PERFORMANCE WORK

- Flamenco, Middle Eastern dance and modern-fusion improvisational soloist; 1999 to present
- Guest Artist to choreograph Flamenco, Middle Eastern Dance, and Fusion works for Phillips Exeter Academy's Spring Dance Concerts; 2000 to present
- *Women's Works: An Evening of Original Dance Performances* -- annual 5-woman show with both local and NYC-based modern dancers, Unity Center for the Performing Arts, Unity, ME.
 - Aug 2006: Choreographed "Sedna," solo; collaboration, "Caterpillar," group improvisation
 - July 2007: Choreographed "Shadow Work," solo; collaborative choreography: "Sisters," duet
 - Aug 2008: organizing and choreographing solo and duet for upcoming show

CHOREOGRAPHIES FOR EVENTS

- "Four Elements" for Carver Hill Art Gallery Opening, July 3, 2008, Camden, ME (upcoming). Indoor/outdoor show exploring our relationship to natural elements, employing fire and wind as literal 'props', as well as water and earth as 'source'.
- "New Year's By the Bay 2007" at the Colonial Theater, Belfast, ME. Choreographed both solo & collaborative pieces; worked improvisationally, for multi-idiom show with 2 other dancers.
- "Love Medicine," June 2, 2007 @ The Yellow House Art Gallery, Rockport, ME. Indoor/ outdoor ritual/performance for art show opening.
- "Light Through the Night: A Solstice Celebration," Portsmouth, NH. Conceived and performed interactive dance & music celebration: (For Pro Portsmouth, NH, 2000 & 2001 independently in 2002).

IMPROVISATIONAL PERFORMANCES

A New Vaudeville Review, April 5, 2008

Belfast & Camden Farmer's Markets, 2006, 2007 & 2008

International Belly Dance shows, including Magic Carpet in Medford, MA (June 10, 2007) & Spirit of the Tribes, Hollywood, FL (April, 2005 & 2006)

Common Ground Fair, 2006

"Mediterranean Cruise Dinner" for UNH School of Hospitality, Durham, NH, May, 2006

Fundraiser for Strawberry Banke, Portsmouth, NH, Feb, 2005

First Nights: Belfast, ME 2006, 2005; Montpelier, VT 2001 & Gloucester, MA 2000

RESTAURANTS

Tasca's, Brookline, MA;
Ciento, Portsmouth, NH;
Zaatar Café, Portsmouth, NH;
Mirage, Santa Fe, NM

EDUCATION

- 1999 - 2001 Lesley University, Cambridge, MA: Master of Arts
Interdisciplinary Studies: Dance as a Healing Art, w/ Dance Therapy emphasis; magna cum laude
- 1990 - 1992 University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH: Master of Arts
English Literature; magna cum laude
- 1984 to 1988 University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH: Bachelor of Arts
Dual major: English & Studio Art

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

- 2005: Shadow Work™ Basic Training with Nicola & John Kirk (UK) -- first level of training in a model of Jungian-based psychotherapeutic work employing drama in a ritualized container.
- 2003 to 2005: two-year apprenticeship with healer, ceremonialist, Breathwork™ and Shadow Work™ facilitator, ALisa Starkweather, in self-development and facilitating women's groups.
- 1994 - present: Flamenco with Veronica Soliz; Omayra Amaya; La Meira; Juaquin, Marisol & Eva Encinias-Sandoval; Ciro; Imaculada Ortega; Mercedes Amaya; Ramón de los Reyes; Pablo Rodarte.
- 1997- present:
Arabic Dance: Souhail Kaspar, Myra Morris, Carolina Varga Dinicu (Morocco), Tarik Abd El Malik, Josie Conte, Alia Thabit, Faten Salama, Leila
American Belly Dance: Lorraine Lafata, Travis Jarrell; Pheadra; Shoshanna
American Tribal Style: Paulette Rees-Denis; Carolena Nericcio; Kajira Djoumahana
Tribal Fusion: Rachel Brice, Jill Paker, Kami Liddle; Kassar; Zafira; Heather Stants; Zoe Jakes
West Coast Technique: Suhaila Salimpour, Mira Betz
Khalbelia (Rajasthani): Coleena Shakti; Christine Andrews
Moroccan: Carolina Varga Dinicu (Morocco)
Algerian: Leila Haddad

Turkish Rom: Artemis Mourat, Dalia Carella, Cat Schwartz, Johara, Jessiah
Uzbek: Travis Jarrell; Robin Friend; Kafif
Zambra: Elena Lentini
Dabkah: Karim Nagi
Doubek (Arabic Drum): Raquay Danzinger, Karim Nagi,

ARTICLES (Partial Listing)

- (co-authored text, but not title) "Jingle All the Way" in *The Maine Edge*, June 4, 2008
- (authored) "Dancing for Women" in *Middle Eastern Dance in New England*, January/February, 2008, vol. 11, No. 1
- (interviewed) "Shake It Up: Baring the Truth About Belly Dancing" in *Spotlight Magazine*, May 6, 2004
- (interviewed) "Do You Want to Dance" in *Oprah Magazine*, November, 2002
- (interviewed) for novel *The Flamenco Academy*, by Sarah Bird
- (authored) "Of Peonies and Thorned Roses: A Dancer's Journey" in *Middle Eastern Dance in New England*, July/August, 2001, vol. 4, No. 3

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Heléna Melone began her studies of flamenco as a studio art in 1994, and in 1996 travelled to Andalusia where, in the caves of Sacre Monte, Granada, she experienced it as living art form and vehicle of personal expression of the people to whom it belongs, the Gitano. There she realized it in its improvisational and spontaneous nature, an art form which, like Jazz, plays off motifs within a set structure, but which blossoms in the moment of its execution, as an expression of the individual artist -- whether singer, dancer, or guitarist -- in that moment of its creation. The energy which fuels it -- much like the Blues -- comes from a centuries-long history of oppression and asserts, in all its aspects: "I am; I claim my place here, however difficult or tenuous is this life." It is an art filled with both fierceness and longing, and although playful at times, the intimacy of the relationship between life and death, and the struggle towards life is always throbbing beneath its surface.

When, in 1997, having suffered a foot injury, Heléna began her studies in Middle Eastern Dance with Travis Jarrell in Santa Fe, NM, another avenue into an improvisational art form opened before her. Through Middle Eastern dance, in its wide range of styles which have developed over time and across

the vast distances of the silk and spice routes through which the art passed and evolved, she found expression of the celebration of life in its sweetness and abundance... though not without a capacity to convey its pains. Middle Eastern dance, although an idiom related to flamenco in its music, relationship between dancer and musician, and in aspects of the movement of the dance itself, is the emotional antithesis of flamenco. Its quality of movement nourishes and soothes, like food and honeyed water. Also an art of spontaneous creation whose goal it is to be the physical manifestation of the music, giving the artist much leeway as to how to be the music's incarnation, it was, for Heléna, the perfect compliment to the power and fierceness of flamenco.

Being an improvisational artist by nature in all realms of her life, including in teaching English and dance, the next natural step was to learn the individual forms as equally accessible yet distinct languages so that the two idioms, once fully understood and executed as such, could be blended and merged into one. Once melded, the fusion, an original style, became the ideal, full expression for Heléna as an artist -- both an improvisational dancer fluent in her idiom and moment-to-moment ability to express what she feels and hears in the music, and as a choreographer with the capacity to utilize her both forms to create unique pieces with a broad range of emotional content.

Having pioneered Flamenco-Belly Fusion, she has performed and taught throughout the eastern seaboard, from Maine to Florida, as well as New Mexico, where she was interviewed for her understanding of the nature and technical aspects of flamenco by Sarah Bird for an article for *Oprah Magazine* as well as for her novel, *The Flamenco Academy*. Along the way, Heléna's work has evolved, branching out from its traditional executions as the movements of the dances themselves have suggested to her sources which lie in the inspiration of daily life and in Nature itself. While Flamenco draws heavily upon both "attitude" for social survival and the body language of the bullfight, Middle Eastern Dance often emulates the movements of plants and animals subject to water and wind. Her exploration of these sources have taken her further into the realm of using dance as a medium to explore our relationship to Nature and our environment. In recent years, study and practice of ShadowWork™ (Jungian-based psychotherapy in a ritualized container) has influenced her work in both content and form, sometimes drawing upon the archetypes used by Karl Jung and the developers of ShadowWork™. Additionally, she has incorporated use of props both traditional in Flamenco (*mantón*)

and Belly Dance (sword, veil, and candles), as well as incorporating non-traditional ones, such as feathers and fire.

In the past few years, collaborations with dancers of modern and/or West African dance backgrounds (most notably Shana Bloomstein and Katenia Keller), as well as her own explorations of creative movement and contact improvisation, have led Heléna to cultivate new work. Still deeply personal in nature, new choreographic work has evolved into more idea- and ritual-based content rather than merely emotional tenor. Although abstract, the pieces are sometimes autobiographical, sometimes mythic, always drawing upon the Natural world and its impact upon us. Heléna's work is richly evocative of a life devoted to exploration of the human experience through dance.