

DANCERS BACKSTAGE RITUALS, PART TWO: SUHAILA SALIMPOUR blogspot.com



This is part two in an on-going series, which will share the the way well known- and in some cases, wildly famous- dancers prepare for their shows.

Everyone I spoke with had a highly personal take on stage preparation: some are “all business”, listening to an iPod and going over choreography, some hate to be around people while others need to, and even others are superstitious- like yours truly!

Do you ever get backstage jitters or performance anxiety?

Even professionals who have been dancing for years sometimes get that sick feeling in the pit of their stomach- you know, the not-so-nice butterflies that feel more like deadly pterodactyls?

There’s not really any way to “cure” these backstage demons, but you can get them under control a bit. Some of these dancers may be doing a certain pre-show something that can help you.

And anyway, it’s just plain fun to get a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes lives of some of the amazing performers we all see live on stage, or on YouTube, as the case may be!

To the belly dance community, Suhaila Salimpour needs no introduction... but I’m gonna go ahead with one anyway...not only is she an uber-talented supernova of a dancer, she is a artistic, talented, a shrewd business woman, and a great mom. I have known her since I first began dancing, and aside from being very generous with me on a professional level, I will attest to the fact that she also has a hilarious sense of humor—just look at the second picture of Suhaila and me on the set of the film “Two Sisters” ...

Here’s what Suhaila does backstage, in her own words:

“I began doing "circle time" with my dance company from the first performance we ever had. We make a big circle with all the dancers, myself, my mom (if she is there), and any musicians or special guests and link pinkies. We all stand facing inside the circle and start to vibrate...or try at least. :)

Then I make a speech about the work that went into the performance we are about to do and how proud I am of everyone. I start a pinky squeeze to pass the love and I watch it go from one dancer to the next. When it gets back to me then we all take a big breath together and start to chant "juice, juice, juice" (like give me some "juice" during the show) and it turns into a zagareet. When we part there are a few hugs given and then we focus and grab props and anything else needed for the performance.

If I'm doing a solo I just like to be left alone. I focus on my music going through it inside my head and make sure I'm deeply warmed up. When I'm back stage getting ready to go on I usually miss my mother and wish

she was backstage with me. It's like I get home sick.

When I'm done I can't get undressed fast enough or drink enough water! “

- SUHAILA SALIMPOUR

Photos:

Suhaila Salimpour

Princess Farhana & Suhaila on the set of the film "Two Sisters", directed by Margaret Cho

For more info on Suhaila, please visit www.suhailainternational.com