

DVD Review: FatChanceBellyDance's Floorwork

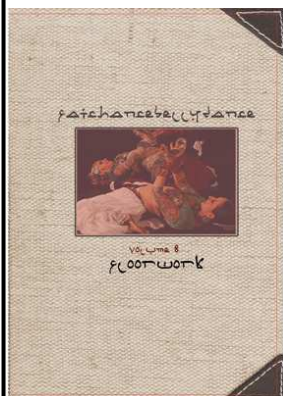
Alright ladies, whether you dance tribal style, fusion, Egyptian or cabaret...it's time to get out your kneepads...Fat Chance Belly Dance's "Floorwork" has arrived! In this DVD (the eighth volume in the instructional series, "Tribal Basics Workshops,") Carolena Nericcio presents information and techniques for floorwork that will fit seamlessly into all our lovely flavors of belly dance.

The DVD includes instruction on several floor techniques such as the Berber Walk and Mermaid Turn, as well as a yoga warm-up, notes on dance anatomy, time for drilling, and a performance by Fat Chance Belly Dance. And my favorite part of the DVD: a behind-the-scenes bonus feature that shows us a more humorous side of the ladies of Fat Chance!

"Floorwork" opens with a brief discussion of anatomical factors involved in techniques on the floor, followed by a yoga warm up led by Fat Chance dancer and certified yoga instructor, Anita Lalwani. The nearly 25 minutes of yoga focuses on hip opening, spinal lengthening and core strength. When I asked Carolena about her own yoga habits, she responded, "I do practice yoga regularly. I find that this hip opener routine is really helpful for floorwork if you do it every day." Even for someone who doesn't practice every day, this yoga routine uses poses and language that are easy to follow and

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made my body feel limber and ready to hit the floor.

In the instructional portion of the DVD, Carolena teaches techniques for getting to and from the floor, movements to perform on the floor, and the dramatic Standing Drop. The movements differ in their degree of difficulty; some I was able to perform with a little practice, while for others I will be working months or years to develop the strength and timing needed to properly and beautifully execute the technique. This spectrum of challenge makes the DVD valuable to a wide range of dancers. Regardless of your dance style, your level of experience or your level of flexibility, I think you'll find movements on this DVD to incorporate into your performance.

Throughout the instructional segments, Carolena's carefully chosen words describe the subtleties of posture that allow us to not only perform the movement within our natural anatomical framework, but also create the signature ATS aesthetic that we crave from a Fat Chance step. The instruction is clear and easy to follow, accompanied by demonstrations of the movement from several angles. I do wish the instructional section could be longer, with more discussion of each movement. (This may be because I am a Carolena junkie and could listen to her teach for days!)

In the Performance section of the DVD, the steps really come alive. The ladies of Fat Chance Belly Dance perform a ten minute set that showcases floorwork in several formations including a circle, a faded quad (chevron formation), facing duets and the beautiful dueling duet formation. The performance shows how floorwork creates a dynamic that feels intimate, dramatic, and almost ceremonial. Viewers (especially tribal dancers) will find plenty of inspiration and ideas in the performance, not just from the dancing, but also the costuming, which is colorful and fresh...very different than the heavier earth tones we're used to seeing on Fat Chance.

In fact, to me the entire DVD has a lighter tone than previous volumes. Carolena and the Fat Chance dancers seem to allow more of their humor and charm into the picture. When I asked Carolena about the tone of the DVD her response was, "I didn't intend for it to be more light-hearted, but it did come out that way! I think the crew we have now are so easy to work with that it allows me to be less stressed during filming. Plus having the whole troupe around makes for a pleasant day." This is by far most evident in the bonus feature "The Making of Floorwork," a behind the scenes peek into the Fat Chance Belly Dance studio. I've met a few of the dancers and I love seeing their humor and playfulness in the DVD. It makes me want to be there., in San Francisco, dancing with Carolena, chatting about tattoos and wine (Sounds great, doesn't it) But since this is real life, (and instead I'm in Eugene, doing laundry, chatting with my kids about super heroes and spelling words) it's nice that "Floorwork" brings Fat Chance to me!

The DVD, "Tribal Basics Workshop Volume 8: Floorwork" is available for purchase through the Fat Chance Belly Dance website (fcbd.com) for \$25. Carolena adds, "Thank you all for the pre-orders! It's great to know we are producing something that you are interested in."

-Lindsey Tandingan