# Emerald Coast Belly Dance

## *A Case for Support*

*Preserving, Teaching, and Advancing Authentic Raqs Sharqi*

*Along Florida's Emerald Coast*

EMERALD COAST
BELLY DANCE

Students participating in a workshop with internationally acclaimed Egyptian instructor Ahmed Hussien during Pensacola Raqs.

# A Welcome from Our Founder

## Gina Nolan

*Founder & Artistic Director*

Welcome,

When I founded Emerald Coast Belly Dance, I had a simple vision: to create meaningful opportunities for people on the Gulf Coast to experience the beauty, artistry, and cultural richness of *Raqs Sharqi* (Oriental Dance).

As both a professional performer and lifelong student of the art, I wanted to share the style of training, artistic excellence, and authentic cultural experiences that had shaped my own career. That vision began with offering quality instruction, but over time it grew into something much larger.

Today, Emerald Coast Belly Dance has grown into a cultural arts organization dedicated to preserving, presenting, and celebrating the performing arts traditions of the Middle East, North Africa, Greece, and Türkiye through education, performance, and community engagement.

Over the years, we have expanded beyond weekly classes to present workshops with respected guest instructors, community performances, and immersive cultural events designed to inspire audiences and bring people together through music and dance.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue building collaborations with musicians, educators, and artists from a variety of disciplines to create unique theatrical experiences that celebrate the richness of these cultures while fostering artistic excellence and cultural appreciation.

One of my greatest passions is introducing audiences to the beauty and artistry of *Raqs Sharqi*. In many parts of the country, Middle Eastern restaurants, festivals, and cultural celebrations provide natural opportunities for people to experience this remarkable art form. Here on the Gulf Coast, however, those opportunities are few and far between.

That means we have the privilege—and the responsibility—to help create them.

Every class, workshop, performance, and cultural event we present is an invitation to discover something extraordinary: the elegance of the music, the depth of the history, the richness of the traditions, and the universal joy of artistic expression.

We believe these experiences enrich our community, encourage cultural understanding, and remind us that the performing arts have the extraordinary power to connect people across backgrounds, traditions, and generations.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about Emerald Coast Belly Dance. Whether you choose to sponsor, partner with, collaborate alongside us, or simply attend one of our events, your support helps make these experiences possible for our community.

Together, we can continue creating something truly extraordinary for the Gulf Coast.

Warmly,
**Gina Nolan**
Founder & Artistic Director
Emerald Coast Belly Dance

**What is *Raqs Sharqi*?**
*Raqs Sharqi* (pronounced **ROCKS SHAR-key**) is the traditional theatrical dance form that developed in Egypt and is performed throughout the Middle East and beyond. Celebrated for its expressive artistry, musical interpretation, and rich cultural heritage, it continues to evolve while remaining deeply connected to its historical roots.

# Why Our Work Matters

The performing arts have the unique ability to bring people together across cultures, generations, and backgrounds.

Through music, dance, and shared artistic experiences, we discover common ground, celebrate our differences, and gain a deeper appreciation for the world around us.

For many communities, opportunities to experience the performing arts of the Middle East and surrounding regions are woven naturally into everyday life through festivals, cultural celebrations, restaurants, and live music venues.

Here on the Gulf Coast, however, those opportunities are few and far between.

**That is why Emerald Coast Belly Dance exists.**

We believe our community deserves opportunities to experience the beauty of *Raqs Sharqi*, traditional music, and the rich performing arts traditions of the **Middle East, North Africa, Greece, and Türkiye**—not only as entertainment, but as meaningful expressions of living cultural heritage.

Every class we teach, every workshop we host, every guest artist we welcome, and every performance we present is an opportunity to inspire curiosity, deepen cultural appreciation, and create memorable artistic experiences that might not otherwise exist within our community.

Through collaboration with musicians, educators, cultural organizations, and fellow artists, we strive to build bridges between communities while enriching the cultural landscape of the Gulf Coast.

Together, we are creating experiences that educate, inspire, and connect.

Live music and *Raqs Sharqi* come together in performance, celebrating the timeless connection between musicians and dancers.

***"Dance has the power to connect us where words cannot."***

**— Emerald Coast Belly Dance**

# How We Fulfill Our Mission

Emerald Coast Belly Dance fulfills its mission through four core areas of focus—Educate, Perform, Present, and Collaborate. Together, these pillars create meaningful artistic experiences that celebrate the beauty and cultural richness of *Raqs Sharqi* and its related performing arts traditions.

## Educate

**Year-Round Classes**
Emerald Coast Belly Dance offers year-round instruction for adults of all experience levels, providing a welcoming environment where students develop technique, artistry, confidence, and a deeper understanding of *Raqs Sharqi*.

**Guest Workshops**
We regularly bring respected guest artists and master instructors to the Gulf Coast, providing opportunities for continuing education that would otherwise require significant travel.

## Perform

From intimate cultural showcases to community festivals and private engagements, our performances celebrate the beauty of *Raqs Sharqi* while introducing audiences to its rich musical and cultural traditions. Professional artists, emerging performers, and collaborative productions all serve our mission of sharing this remarkable art form with the broader community.

# Present

Emerald Coast Belly Dance doesn't simply present performances—we create opportunities for audiences to experience *Raqs Sharqi* as a living performing art through education, live performance, and meaningful cultural engagement.

**Signature Initiatives**

🌙 **The Raq Room Workshop**

Educational workshops that bring experienced guest artists and specialized instruction to the Gulf Coast, fostering continuing education and artistic growth.

🌙 **The Raq Room Revue**

A signature performance experience celebrating authentic Raqs Sharqi through artistic excellence, cultural exchange, and live performance.

⭐ **Pensacola Raqs**

*Our flagship educational event*, bringing internationally respected artists to the Gulf Coast for immersive workshops, cultural exchange, and inspiring performances.

Public performances create opportunities for cultural connection, artistic appreciation, and community engagement.

# Collaborate

We believe the most memorable artistic experiences are created through collaboration. By bringing together dancers, musicians, educators, and cultural organizations, we create opportunities for audiences to experience the vibrant art of *Raqs Sharqi*.

Looking ahead, Emerald Coast Belly Dance is committed to expanding artistic partnerships that connect live music, dance, education, and cultural exchange—creating immersive experiences that inspire audiences while strengthening the Gulf Coast arts community.

# Looking Ahead

## Building the Future of Cultural Arts on the Gulf Coast

Emerald Coast Belly Dance is building toward a future where authentic *Raqs Sharqi* is not only performed, but celebrated as a vibrant part of the Gulf Coast's cultural landscape. Through education, collaboration, and artistic excellence, we seek to create meaningful experiences that connect communities, inspire curiosity, and foster lasting appreciation for this remarkable art form.

**Our vision includes:**

**Expanding the Raq Room**

Expand the Raq Room Workshop and Revue into a premier Gulf Coast cultural arts experience featuring exceptional instruction, inspiring performances, and meaningful community engagement.

**Live Music Collaborations**

Expand opportunities for dancers and musicians to perform together, celebrating the historic relationship between live music and *Raqs Sharqi* while creating unforgettable experiences for audiences.

**Community Partnerships**

Develop lasting partnerships with arts organizations, educators, musicians, venues, and cultural institutions to create innovative cultural programming throughout the Gulf Coast.

**Educational Outreach**

Increase access to authentic cultural education through workshops, demonstrations, guest artists, and community partnerships.

**Inspiring New Audiences**

Welcome people of all backgrounds to discover the beauty, artistry, and cultural richness of Middle Eastern performing arts through engaging and accessible public programs.

**Together, we are building a Gulf Coast where authentic cultural arts educate, connect, and inspire generations to come.**

# Partnership Opportunities

## Support the Future of Cultural Arts on the Gulf Coast

Every partnership helps Emerald Coast Belly Dance expand educational opportunities, present inspiring performances, and celebrate the rich traditions of *Raqs Sharqi* with audiences across the Gulf Coast.

Whether you are an individual, business, or community organization, your support helps create meaningful cultural experiences that educate, connect, and inspire.

### Friend

$100

Perfect for individuals supporting our mission.

- Website Recognition
- Social Media Thank-you

### Patron

$250

Helping expand arts education and community programming.

Everything in Friend +
- Printed Program Recognition
- Two Complimentary Tickets

### Partner

$500

Supporting guest artists, workshops, and cultural events.

Everything in Patron +
- Business Logo
- Four Complimentary Tickets

### Champion

$1000

Helping create unforgettable cultural arts experiences for the Gulf Coast.

Everything in Partner +
- Stage recognition
- Featured sponsor spotlight
- Six Complimentary tickets

### Presenting Partner

$2,500+

*(or customized underwriting opportunities)*

Our premier partnership opportunity.

Everything in Champion +
- Largest logo
- Press recognition
- VIP seating
- Event display opportunity
- Eight Complimentary tickets

# In-Kind Partnerships

## There Are Many Ways to Make an Impact

Not every meaningful contribution comes in the form of a financial gift. Emerald Coast Belly Dance gratefully welcomes businesses, organizations, and individuals who support our mission through donated goods, professional services, facilities, and other valuable resources that help us expand authentic cultural arts programming throughout the Gulf Coast.

Examples include:

**Hotel Accommodations**

**Venue Sponsorship**

**Printing Services**

**Catering & Hospitality**

**Photography & Videography**

**Lighting & Production**

**Marketing & Advertising**

**Performer & Guest Artist Hospitality**

Recognition is thoughtfully customized based on the value and nature of each contribution.

# Customized Partnerships

Every organization is unique, and we are happy to develop customized partnership opportunities that align with your goals while supporting Emerald Coast Belly Dance's mission of enriching the Gulf Coast through the performing arts. We welcome the opportunity to explore creative collaborations that create meaningful value for both your organization and our community.

*Every partnership—large or small—helps preserve, present, and celebrate the cultural traditions we are proud to share with our community.*

# Your Partnership Makes the Difference

Behind every inspiring performance, educational workshop, and cultural experience is a community of individuals, businesses, organizations, and artists who believe in the power of the performing arts. Together, we create opportunities for education, artistic excellence, and cultural connection that enrich the Gulf Coast for generations to come.

## Your Partnership Makes Possible

Arts Education

Live Music & Artistic Collaboration

Cultural Arts Programming

Exceptional Venues

Production Excellence

Community Outreach

Guest Artists

## Our Commitment

We are committed to being responsible stewards of every contribution entrusted to Emerald Coast Belly Dance. Whether through financial support, donated services, collaborative partnerships, or volunteer involvement, every investment is valued, carefully managed, and directed toward creating meaningful cultural experiences that enrich our community. We believe in cultivating genuine relationships with our partners through transparency, gratitude, and shared success.

*Great communities are built when people choose to invest in experiences that educate, inspire, and connect.*

— Emerald Coast Belly Dance

# Join Us

## Help Build the Future of Authentic *Raqs Sharqi* on the Gulf Coast

Every performance...

Every workshop...

Every collaboration...
begins with someone who believes that authentic cultural arts strengthen communities.

**We'd be honored to partner with you.**

**Gina Nolan**
Founder & Artistic Director
Emerald Coast Belly Dance

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Scan to Learn More

*Together, we can preserve tradition, inspire new audiences, and build a richer cultural future for the Gulf Coast.*
— Emerald Coast Belly Dance