

Quincie Douglas Williams

Dance 162/163

Spring 2008

Professor Sohaila

Performance: Roots of Raqs in San Diego

Date: 17 May 2008

Performer: Zaphara

The final performer at Sohaila's 10th Annual Dance Extravaganza was Zaphara from Seattle, Washington. I consider her the headliner of the evening. Her special performance skills included the use of her zills, sword, floorwork, and her dynamic interaction with the audience.

Zaphara glided on the stage calmly and confidently. The calm part of her debut was short lived. Once she captured the attention of the audience with her beautiful attire (black and gold), she then captured them with her piercing eyes. I don't recall seeing a smile on her face; however, I vividly remember those eyes that looked suspiciously into the eyes of others. Initially I thought maybe Zaphara was just catching her breath when she stopped and interacted with the audience stealthily. Was I ever wrong! I now think she was just stalking her prey for the evening.

Zaphara's movements included dynamic check-locks (of which she had plenty to lock/unlock); hip/abdominal movements; and the use of her veil and zills. When she wasn't locking her upper torso, she was locking & unlocking her lower half, along with playing her zills, and the audience. Her fluid movements finally moved her toward the retrieval of her sword, with which hypnotized the audience.

Zaphara placed her sword on her head, with the blade pointed downward. She started out by dancing softly with it in place; such as soft arm movements and flowing across the floor. From the soft movements she moved into spins, changes of

elevations, and working all areas/aspects of the audience. From the manner in which she moved, everyone had the opportunity to see her unique and spectacular performance. Leaving the audience and back onto the stage, Zaphara performed floorwork. She went from actually lowering herself onto the floor to lying on it and turning her body 360 degrees, with she herself being in a prone position. The sword remained deftly as she'd placed it on the top of her head. The audience, me included, was awed by this highly skilled presentation of dance.

I'm not sure of the length of time of Zaphara's performance; I do know that she performed for quite a lengthy period of time; yet not lengthy enough for those of us who was captured by her skills. With several standing ovations in her honor during the evening, she was definitely the lady of the evening. The names of the music tracks to which she danced were not listed, only the artists. In retrospect, with the length of time she performed, I suppose another program page would have been needed to list the tracks.

Incidentally, at one time Zaphara interacted offstage with the audience on her right. She wrapped her veil around a gentleman at the table. I never saw the veil returned to her. Um-m, maybe I'll go look for it; having been under her spell, it must have magic powers. I'll buy the DVD in order to relive the performance.